

Three Israeli Arabs released

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Three Israeli Arabs arrested on suspicion of helping the suicide bomber who blew himself up in a Tel Aviv cafe last week were released Tuesday, hours after their case became public. Police determined that the three men had no connection with the bomber, who killed himself and three Israeli women in last Friday's blast, Israel Radio said. The suspects were arrested Saturday, but court authorities did not permit publication of the fact until Tuesday. The men arrested — Marouf Mahajne, 45, his son Said, 20, and Salim Jabarin, 21 — are from Umm Al Fahm, an Arab city in northern Israel. They denied any connection to the bombing. The three had been suspected of driving the suicide bomber, 28-year-old Musa Abu Diya, by truck from the West Bank village of Surif and dropping him off near the cafe where he blew himself up.

Jordan Times

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جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»

Knesset rejects Har Homa motion

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli parliament on Tuesday threw out a censure motion brought by the left-wing opposition over the government's plans for a new settlement in Arab East Jerusalem, parliament sources said. The motion put forward by the Meretz and Hadash (communist) party was rejected by 51 votes to 42, with two abstentions. The opposition wanted to censure the right-wing government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over its plans for a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem. "The prime minister promised peace through security. There is neither peace nor security," Meretz leader Yossi Sarid said. Mr. Sarid was referring to a suicide bombing in Tel Aviv Friday that killed three Israelis and wounded more than 40. Palestinians have also clashed with Israeli forces on the West Bank.

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France holds 20 alleged Hamas supporters

PARIS (AFP) — French police have held for questioning 20 supporters of the Muslim association, supposed to be affiliated with the Palestinian group Hamas, officials said on Tuesday. Police carried out their sweep after a routine car check on Sunday and on Monday. A large force raided the headquarters of the Muslim association at Garene-Colombes, a western suburb of Paris, arresting ten people and seizing pump-action guns. The 20 suspects have been held since Sunday. More raids and arrests took place Tuesday, the officials said, adding that some of those arrested were suspected of planning armed robberies. Documentation was also seized, including anti-Semitic tracts and video cassettes, the officials added.

Israel extends term for Palestinian

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A Palestinian serving a life sentence for deploying a suicide bomber who killed six Israelis in 1994, was sentenced to an additional 18 years for beating to death a Palestinian cellmate whom he suspected of collaborating with prison authorities, Israeli news reports said Tuesday. Said Badame was convicted of supplying the bomb with which a militant killed himself and six Israelis at Hadra, northern Israel, in April 1994. The two sentences are to run consecutively, Israeli army radio said.

Iraqi exile groups meet in Syria

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Twenty-one Iraqi opposition groups met in Damascus on Tuesday to discuss the overthrow of President Saddam Hussein's regime. A member of the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, Bayan Jabr, said the groups decided to hold regular meetings to "come to a joint position on three issues — the fall of the Iraqi regime, the embargo on Iraq and the unity of Iraq." The Iraqi opposition groups include Islamic, nationalist, democratic and Kurdish groups and have long had difficulties in agreeing a course of action. They met here on March 11 to call for the "overthrow" of the regime, without setting out how they hoped to achieve this aim. A Shiite Muslim group, the Islamic Action Organisation, boycotted Tuesday's meeting because of the opposition's lack of clear objectives.

Kuwait to foot bill for Somali meeting

CAIRO (AFP) — Kuwait is to foot the bill for a reconciliation conference of rival Somali factions expected to be held soon, the Kuwaiti representative to the Arab League said Tuesday. Magdi Al Zofairi said his country has agreed to pay the sum of \$100,000 requested by Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdel Meguid to convene the conference. Mr. Abdul Meguid put the request on Monday to Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah "who immediately accepted," Mr. Zofairi said. Last week Mr. Abdul Meguid urged member countries of the 22-strong Arab League to provide financial assistance to Somalia, after meeting at the league's Cairo headquarters with a delegation of rival Somali factions.

W. Bank clashes rage amid political stalemate

Dozens injured; chances seen grim for immediate Arafat-Netanyahu meeting

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israeli troops and Palestinian stone throwers clashed in the West Bank on Tuesday, and chances for a meeting between Benjamin Netanyahu and Yasser Arafat became increasingly remote as both attached conditions to such a summit.

Nearly 100 Palestinians were wounded in the clashes in the West Bank, reports said.

Tension was further heightened when Mr. Arafat's Fateh faction representatives said they were not ruling out the use of arms in confrontations with Israeli soldiers.

One of Mr. Netanyahu's aides said Israel would want to make security the main issue in a Netanyahu-Arafat meeting, while the Palestinian leader suggested he was not ready to participate in a public relations event that did not produce results.

Mr. Arafat told reporters at the end of a brief visit to Sri Lanka that he was willing to hold talks with the Israeli leader, but warned: "If it is for peace, I am ready... If it is only for propaganda, then it is something different," he added.

He also accused Israel of trying to create an Afghan-style civil war in Palestinian territory, while disregarding agreements reached between the two sides.

"The Israeli government is looking to (create) instability and confrontation between Palestinians like what you see in Afghanistan — a civil war — which is not acceptable to us. We have a successful national dialogue with all the Palestinians, including the Hamas," Mr. Arafat said.

He rejected calls to clamp down on hardliners, saying: "The Americans did not ask me to clamp down on Hamas."



Palestinians fire slingshots at Israeli soldiers on Tuesday on the main street of Bethlehem (AFP photo)

The Middle East peace process has been plunged into crisis over the building of a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem and a Palestinian suicide bombing on Friday that killed three Israelis in Tel Aviv.

"I am not asking for the moon," Mr. Arafat said. "I am trying to achieve real peace in the land of peace. I am asking for the accurate and honest implementation of what has been agreed upon at the White House twice."

He repeated his call for strong international support to block the expansion of Israeli settlements and said peace in the Middle East was not only for Israelis and Palestinians but for the entire world.

He also accused local reporters of "listening only to the Israeli side."

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) president, who arrived Monday, was

touchy about questions on his latest foreign travels amid growing tension at home.

Mr. Arafat brushed aside questions about his current tour abroad and calls from Israeli leaders to return home to "fight terrorism" after Friday's bombing.

Asked about the objective of his latest tour he retorted: "Are you against my visiting friendly countries?" He arrived from Pakistan where he attended a summit of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and left for Bangladesh for that country's Independence Silver Jubilee.

At a public meeting Monday, Mr. Arafat rejected a call by Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy to return home saying: "He hasn't the right to give me orders."

Mr. Levy said Monday that Mr. Arafat must understand that the problems can

only be solved in the Palestinian territory, not abroad. "It's up to Yasser Arafat to choose here (Jerusalem) the means to fight terrorism," Mr. Levy said. "Negotiations must take place at the highest level, between Yasser Arafat and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu."

Israelis and Palestinians have been sliding deeper into crisis since Israel started construction earlier this month of a Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

Tensions were heightened by last week's Tel Aviv cafe bombing claimed by the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas). The blast was followed by daily clashes between Palestinian stone throwers and Israeli troops.

The two sides blame each other for the violence and take increasingly hardened positions.

On Sunday, Israel handed the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) a list of six demands, such as disarming and arresting militants, and said it would not resume peace talks in earnest until the demands were met.

The Palestinians balked, and one of Mr. Arafat's security chiefs announced Monday that the Palestinians would no longer cooperate with Israel on security matters, such as reining in militants.

Ahmad Qureia, the speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council, said Tuesday that the PNA would not move against its own people at a time when Israel is violating the spirit of the peace accords by building in Arab East Jerusalem.

"We cannot comply with Mr. Netanyahu's request to guard his bulldozers which are confiscating our land,"

which are killing the agreement," Mr. Qureia told BBC television.

Israel, in turn, accused Mr. Arafat of having given the "green light" for militants to carry out attacks in Israel.

Israeli security forces were on high alert Tuesday following fresh warnings that militants planned to set off more bombs.

On the main highway leading out of Tel Aviv, police set up a checkpoint, slowing down cars and stopping some motorists deemed suspicious.

Clashes erupted Tuesday in the West Bank towns of Hebron and Bethlehem. In each town, hundreds of Palestinians hurled stones at Israeli troops who responded with tear gas and rubber bullets. In Bethlehem, eight protesters were injured by rubber bullets.

In Bethlehem, Palestinian police did not interfere. In Hebron, police arrived at the scene half an hour after the stone throwing began, formed a human chain and pushed the protesters back.

Israeli soldiers shot and wounded more than 25 Palestinians with rubber-coated metal bullets during clashes near the tomb of the biblical Matriarch Rachel in Bethlehem.

The Voice of Palestine radio station said more than 90 other Palestinians were taken to hospital for treatment from tear-gas inhalation.

Witnesses said that some of the Palestinian demonstrators were wearing gas masks. Some Palestinian policemen tried in vain to stop the stone-throwing. Some of the wounded were Palestinian policemen.

About 200 youths briefly clashed also with Israeli soldiers in a part of Hebron in the West Bank that is still under occupation, witnesses said. They said the soldiers refrained from firing.

(Continued on page 7)

Majali leaves tomorrow to join King in U.S.

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali will leave for the United States on Thursday to join His Majesty King Hussein in his talks with President Bill Clinton next week, Information Minister Samir Mutawe' said Tuesday.

Dr. Mutawe', who was speaking to reporters following a regular Cabinet session, added that Jordanian and American leaders were expected to discuss measures to peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

He added that U.S. military assistance to the Kingdom would be among different points the King would discuss with the American officials.

The minister said that a four-man team headed by Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Jawad Anani will head for Morocco on Wednesday to represent Jordan in the March 27 meeting of the Jerusalem Committee, which will discuss Israeli settlement plans in occupied Jerusalem.

During Tuesday's session, the Cabinet discussed the formation of a committee that will set the guidelines for the next parliamentary elections to ensure the maximum participation by Jordanian citizens and fair voting, the minister said.

Majali pledges support for judiciary

Dr. Majali on Tuesday said his government would provide the proper atmosphere for judges to enable them to perform their full role efficiently in implementation of King Hussein's directives to the government.

The prime minister, who was speaking during a meeting at the Prime Ministry with the head of the Higher Judicial Council and president of the Higher Court of Justice, Naji Tarawneh, President of the Court of Cassation, Omar Abaza and members of the Higher Judiciary Council, called on judges to utilise the experience of other countries through organised visits to countries with judicial expertise.

The judges, who had called on the Prime Ministry to congratulate Dr. Majali, voiced hope that the government would implement the directives of King Hussein and provide a suitable atmosphere for them to function properly.

Also on Tuesday the prime minister met with President of Amman Chamber of Industry Khaldoun Abu Hassan and reviewed with him economic issues.

Dr. Majali said economy should be based on efficient and active administration in order for it to achieve the economic goals.

Dr. Majali stressed the need for decentralisation, noting that the government and the private sector should work for the benefit of the people.

Russia to go ahead with Iraq deal regardless of sanctions

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia and Iraq will take preparatory steps to implement a major oil contract without waiting for the lifting of international sanctions on Baghdad, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posuvalyuk announced on Tuesday.

He told correspondents that the decision "is not counter to the sanctions regime" imposed on Iraq after its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Russia and Iraq signed a \$3.8-billion deal in Baghdad Friday to develop Iraq's western Qurnah oilfield. The project will be spread over 23 years.

Qurnah, which lies west of the southern capital of Basra, has proven reserves of almost 15 billion barrels, making it the largest in Iraq, according to unofficial estimates.

Mr. Posuvalyuk said all Russian-Iraqi projects were long-term, but he added that "some preliminary work, on documents, will be carried out now."

"In the light of the breadth of the contract (with Iraq), we think it important to start working before the start of practical implementation," he said.

have a 75-per cent stake in the project, and Iraq the remaining 25 per cent.

The Russian consortium will consist of Lukoil (52.5 per cent), Zarubezhneft (11.25 per cent) and Mashinimport (11.25 per cent), Mr. Alekperov told reporters.

Mr. Posuvalyuk said the main preliminary points in the contract concerned the financing scheme, the list of suppliers, and preparations for equipment deliveries. But no actual delivery of equipment or transfer of funds will occur before sanctions are lifted, he added.

Under the terms of the oil-for-food deal signed in May 1996 — the first easing of sanctions since they were imposed — Iraq can export \$2 billion of oil every six months.

The proceeds are earmarked for purchases of humanitarian goods, as well as to defray U.N. costs and compensate victims of the invasion of Kuwait.

"Not only does Russia not intend to violate the sanctions systems, but even if it wanted to, that would not be possible in fact," Mr. Posuvalyuk said.

Iraq was a major Soviet trading partner and owes Russia about \$10 billion. The first phase of western

Qurnah's development was carried out by the Soviet Union during the early 1970s.

Iraq, which has proven crude reserves of more than 110 billion barrels, expects to earn receipts of more than \$70 billion over the contract period, the Iraqi authorities said.

Russian Energy Minister Pyotr Rodionov told reporters that Russia and Iraq had plans to set up a joint drilling enterprise for the project, involving the Russian companies Zarubezhneft and Rosneft.

However, he said it would not start operating until sanctions were lifted.

According to Mr. Alekperov, of the 600,000 barrels per day (b/d) that Iraq can sell under the sanctions regime, 140,000 barrels are sold by Russian companies.

Asked why Russia had opted to develop Iraq's oil instead of investing more in the Caspian Sea projects, Mr. Rodionov said: "We lost some opportunities in the Caspian after the collapse of the Soviet Union."

Lukoil has a minority stake in a \$7.5-billion international project to develop three Azerbaijani offshore fields — Azeri, Chirag and Gyunesli.

Red Army indictments ratified

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanese judicial authorities have upheld the indictment of five suspected Japanese Red Army members arrested last month for a series of passport violations, judicial sources said Tuesday.

Beirut appeals court prosecutor Abdullah Bitar drew up a charge sheet for examining magistrate Said Mirza outlining the exact charges of possessing and using false documents — crimes which carry between three and seven years in prison, the sources said.

The charge sheet said the five Japanese nationals, detained since Feb. 15, obtained illegally official stamps from the Lebanese embassy in Athens. Mr. Bitar also said the five used false Brazilian, Thai, Chinese and Singaporean passports in which they put false Lebanese stamps which allowed them to stay in Lebanon, the sources added.

The charge sheet also states that all five suspects are members of the Japanese Red Army, including 57-year-old Masao Adashi which it says is the group's Middle East leader. The other suspects are named as Kazuo Tohira, 44, Haro Wako, 48, Mariko Yamamoto, 56, and 49-year-old Kozo Okamoto.

Bashir asks opponents home, with conditions

CAIRO (R) — The Sudanese president said in an interview published on Tuesday that opposition leaders in exile can come home and even become ministers as long as they stop cooperating with what he called "the enemies of Islam."

But the president, Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan Al Bashir, also told the international Arabic newspaper Al Hayat that even this would not solve Sudan's problems because hostile foreign powers were anxious to stop the country gaining in strength.

The opposition National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has resorted to military force in its attempt to overthrow Gen. Bashir's government, which is dominated by the elitist National Islamic Front (NIF). The NDA leaders want Gen. Bashir to resign and they have repeatedly refused to cooperate with his government.

Sudan says Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda and the United States are behind this year's rebel offensives in the east and south of the country. Gen. Bashir was apparently referring to some or all of these states when he spoke of "the enemies of Islam."

Gen. Bashir said his government had always tried to treat opposition leaders well, even when it put them in prison after his military coup in 1989, so that they would not feel bitter.

For example, the government provided Democratic Unionist Party leader Mohammed Othman Al Mirghani with an air conditioner when he was in Kobar prison in Khartoum in July 1989, he said.

"Even if we signed a reconciliation agreement with the northern (opposition) parties, that would add to the scheming, the hostility and the conspiracy (by foreign powers). We are certain that an agreement between us and the opposition would not be a solution in itself," he added.

On the military situation on the fronts, Gen. Bashir said only that the Sudanese army had contained the offensive, and now had the initiative. The rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army says it is advancing on the large southern town of Juba. The U.N. said Tuesday an Antonov warplane dropped six bombs Monday on the centre of the rebel-held town of Maridi in southern Sudan, killing a 20-year-old woman and wounding 13 people.

U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) spokeswoman Michele Quintaglie said a WFP team accompanied by a security officer arrived in Maridi just after the bombing occurred at 9:10 a.m. They reported 18 houses hit, she said.

Peace process opponent Iran mends ties with PLO

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran, a fierce opponent of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, has renewed ties with Yasser Arafat after nearly two decades of strained relations with his Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Official Iranian newspapers reported Tuesday that Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani had met with Mr. Arafat on Sunday on the sidelines of a summit of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in Islamabad.

The previously unreported meeting was the first between a top Iranian leader and Mr. Arafat since shortly after the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran.

Mr. Arafat backed the 1979 uprising which led to the fall of the shah of Iran and he visited Tehran just six days after the new leadership took power.

He met with Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and other members of the new regime during his trip and made a visit to the holy city of Mashhad, where he gave a speech

which was well received. Shortly after the visit, however, relations began to worsen between Iran and the PLO, mainly because of Palestinian support for Iraq during the 1980-1988 war with Iran.

Mr. Arafat's peace agreements with Israel, which Iran considers the arch-enemy of Islam and has pledged to destroy, contributed to a further deterioration in ties. Iran is bitterly opposed to the peace process and has frequently accused the PLO and Mr. Arafat of "capitulating to the Zionist regime."

Despite the near total estrangement, Iranian leaders have allowed the PLO to maintain a diplomatic presence here, in the building which formerly housed the Israeli embassy.

An ally of Syria, Iran has provided backing for the hardline Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command of Ahmad Jibril, Islamic Jihad and other hardline Palestinian groups including the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas).

which has an office in the Iranian capital.

The official IRNA news agency said that during the meeting with Mr. Rafsanjani, Mr. Arafat praised Tehran's stand on the Palestinian issue and said the Palestinian people "would never forget their old friends."

Mr. Arafat also reportedly expressed regret over Israel's failure to adhere to peace agreements with the Palestinians and a U.S. veto of a U.N. Security Council resolution condemning the construction of a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

Mr. Rafsanjani also denounced the U.S. Veto, describing it as a "political disgrace," IRNA said. He stressed Iran's unwavering support for the Palestinian people and "full restoration of their rights and liberation of (Jerusalem)," it added.

Political analysts here said Sunday's meeting may pave the way for Mr. Arafat's participation in a summit of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference to take place in Tehran in December.

Amnesty urges Syria to address cases of more than 500 prisoners

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Syrian government should act now to address the cases of more than 500 political prisoners — including prisoners of conscience — and victims of "disappearances" whose cases still remain unresolved, Amnesty International said after the return of its delegation from Syria on Monday.

"We welcome the government's willingness to continue dialogue and cooperation with the organisation for the protection of human rights in Syria, but we would like this translated into action," Amnesty International said. "We have submitted the lists of more than 500 political prisoners to the authorities and we are calling on them to immediately release prisoners detained solely for their political beliefs, the organisation said in a press release."

It said: The Amnesty International delegation also asked the authorities to review the cases of hundreds of political prisoners convicted and sentenced after unfair trials, to release everyone not charged with a recognisably criminal offence and to clarify the fate and whereabouts of the "disappeared." The authori-

ties agreed to look into these cases but gave no time frame as to when this will be accomplished.

The delegation visited Syria between 11 and 24 March and met government officials, including the minister of foreign affairs, interior and justice, as well as information and culture. They also met the supreme state security court's judges, its prosecutor and a member of lawyers. In addition the delegation met the secretaries general of the Arab Writers Union (AWU) and the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU).

As on previous occasions Amnesty International welcomed the growing trend of improvements in human rights in Syria over the last few years. In particular the organisation noted the release of approximately 2,000 political prisoners, including prisoners of conscience, since 1993, and the significant decrease in arbitrary political arrests, detention and torture.

"The Syrian government should now consolidate these positive human rights developments by implementing Syrian and international laws prohibiting arbitrary arrest and detention as well as torture

and also guaranteeing defendants' right to a fair trial," Amnesty International said.

The organisation also urged the authorities to ratify international human rights treaties to which Syria is not a party, such as the Convention against Torture and the optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The government undertook to study possibilities of ratification of international human rights treaties and initiate preventive action against torture by issuing directives to law enforcement officials reminding them that torture is a crime under Syrian law, and that the perpetrators will be punished.

Amnesty International meetings with the Syrian ministers of information and culture, as well as the regional organisations (AWU and AIPU) also addressed promotional activities to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1998. All parties promised to initiate activities on the occasion, and support Amnesty International's activities in this field.



IS IT THE REAL THING? An Israeli rabbi uses a magnifying glass to examine a cow named Zippora, trying to determine whether the animal is a 'red heifer,' whose birth some devout Jews believe, signals the coming of the Messiah. The Bible says red heifers were used for ritual purification. Jewish scholars say only nine such animals were born in all of Jewish history and the 10th and last will be prepared for sacrifice by the Messiah himself. If two hairs of the animal are not red, it is judged invalid. Rabbinic have yet to determine whether Zippora is the real thing (Reuters photo)

GCC considers freezing role in multilateral talks

RIYADH (AFP) — Gulf Arab states are debating whether to freeze their involvement in the multilateral track of the peace process in protest at Israeli policies toward the Palestinians, a Gulf official said Tuesday.

Ahead of a meeting of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) foreign ministers in the Saudi capital, King Fahd condemned Israel's construction of a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem during a cabinet session.

A Gulf official, who asked not to be named, said the two-day GCC meeting opening Tuesday would "debate measures to be taken by Gulf countries, within the general Arab framework" to counter Israel.

"A freeze on the participation of Gulf countries in the multilateral peace negotiations" is being considered, he said. Any final decision will be left to a meeting of Arab League foreign ministers in Cairo on March 30-31.

The GCC secretary general, Jamil Al-Hujailan, told AFP that the Riyadh meeting would discuss "the repercussions on the peace process of the provocative decisions and expansionist actions of Israel."

Saudi Arabia is "following with extreme concern the repeated acts of aggression of the Israeli authorities against the city of Jerusalem, its holy places and its citizens," King Fahd said late Monday.

"Such actions are in defiance of all international resolutions and conventions, which ban Israel from modifying the status of the territories it occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem," he said, quoted by the Saudi Press Agency (SPA).

"For Saudi Arabia, the question of Jerusalem is at the core of all Arab and Islamic caus-

es," he said, voicing "satisfaction" with the Islamic summit in Islamabad where Jerusalem topped the agenda.

Amid calls from Lebanon and Syria to halt contacts with Israel, following the start of work on the new Jewish settlement in Jabal Abu Ghneim in Arab East Jerusalem, the king demanded a just and comprehensive Arab-Israeli settlement.

The multilateral talks, apart from an informal session on refugees, have already ground to a halt since Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his coalition of right-wing and religious parties came to power in June.

The Madrid peace conference in 1991 launched the multilateral track.

Oman warned Sunday of a total break in relations with Israel unless Mr. Netanyahu changes his hardline policies.

"Ties are frozen and can in no way be developed so long as the Netanyahu government continues not to respect its accords" with the Palestinians, said Oman's minister of state for foreign affairs, Yusuf Ben Alawi Ben Abdullah.

"If there is no possibility for Israel to change its policy, I think we will no longer be able to have any link with this government," he said at the Islamabad summit.

Oman and Qatar, who have set up commercial ties with Israel, are the only members of the six-nation GCC to have embarked on a process of normalisation following the launch of Palestinian self-rule in 1994.

The process has been frozen in the wake of Mr. Netanyahu's election.

Mr. Hujailan — whose organisation groups also Bahrain, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — said Iranian Foreign Minister

Ali Akbar Velayati's tour of the Gulf last week will also be on the Riyadh agenda.

"The best guarantee for security in the region is to establish mutual confidence between the countries of the Gulf," said the secretary general. But "declarations of good intentions must be proved by actions." The UAE has an islands dispute with the UAE, its neighbour across the Gulf.

Protests grow in Egypt

Thousands of Egyptian students called for a "holy war" against Israel on Tuesday as protests intensified against the Jewish state's settlement drive in Arab East Jerusalem.

Some 5,000 students gathered at Cairo University chanting slogans calling on the Egyptian government to "open the door to jihad" and saying that "bullets are the only response to settlement building."

The students, who held aloft a model of Jerusalem's Al Aqsa Mosque, also demanded the government expel Israel's ambassador from Cairo and break off all ties with the Jewish state.

On Monday, hundreds of students burned the Israeli flag during demonstrations at four universities in Cairo. Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic on Tuesday joined the worldwide condemnation of Israel's settlement drive in Arab East Jerusalem, describing it as a mistake.

"The settlement policy is a mistaken one because Jerusalem holds a special place in the heart of all Muslims," Mr. Silajdzic said after a meeting here with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

He added that Jerusalem was also a centre for Christians and Jews. "This centre must be preserved, and settlement building prevents this," he said.

International Progress Organisation condemns Israeli settlement policy

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Vienna-based International Progress Organisation (IPO) has strongly condemned the building of thousands of Jewish homes in occupied Jerusalem.

"This measure of the occupying power not only contravenes the so-called 'peace accords' it also violates basic provisions of the Geneva Convention of 1949 as well as of the United Nations Charter, IOP President Hans Koechler said in a press release."

Dr. Koechler noted that peace in any given political context — whether in Palestine or elsewhere — is only meaningful when it is just.

"Peace that is imposed by the more powerful party to a dispute upon the weaker party does not deserve its name, it merely serves as a propaganda tool in the arsenal of the occupying power and its allies or proxies," said the press release, a copy of which was sent to the Jordan Times.

It said: The IPO president recalled the analysis presented by him consistently since the events of the 1991 Gulf war. He referred to the basic illusions which have determined the so-called "peace process" and which have misled the Arab and international public and created false expectations among the people affected by the occupation in Jerusalem and Palestine. These illusions, he stated, have to be replaced by realistic assumptions so as not to mislead the Arab population suffering under the yoke of occupation.

He identified these illusions as follows:

1. That political Zionism would be compatible with the legitimate national rights of the Arabs — while in reality Jewish rights are seen to invalidate basic Arab rights as amply demonstrated by Israel's policy of annexation, expropriation and building settlements in Jerusalem and other parts of occupied Palestine or the Golan Heights.

2. That the United States administration would act as an honest broker between the Arabs and the Israeli occupying power — while the repeated use of the veto by the U.S. has demonstrated beyond any doubt that the U.S. administration sees its role in protecting its privileged Israeli ally under all circumstances.

3. That the United Nations Organisation would be able to play an effective role for the protection of Palestinian and Arab rights — while in reality the Security Council

is paralysed by the American veto and the General Assembly can only appeal to the "moral conscience" of the world, not having any executive power under the present charter.

4. That a peace settlement could be achieved in a situation of an extreme imbalance of forces, i.e. from a position of extreme weakness of the one party under occupation vis-a-vis the occupying power (as it was the case with the PLO in the Arab constellation of 1991) — while in reality the Palestinians had no margin to negotiate under the conditions of realpolitik in the post-Gulf war context.

Dr. Koechler stated that the recent construction work undertaken by the Occupying power in Jerusalem amply demonstrates that Israel totally rejects the notion of Arab sovereignty and Muslim rights in Jerusalem and Palestine. What is prepared to "grant" under the "Oslo accords" is a kind of Palestinian local administration in isolated pockets of territory in the West Bank and Gaza where the exercise of sovereignty — e.g. international relations, defence, border control — remains the sole responsibility of Israel.

This scheme very much resembles the failed "homeland" (Bantustan) scheme of apartheid South Africa. What failed in the former racist South Africa was definitely not work in Palestine. No population under occupation will accept to be humiliated and ruled forever by an illegal occupier.

"Peace" under the conditions of the occupying power unavoidably means subjugation of the population under occupation. "Peace by subjugation" — including expropriation of territories, destruction of houses, bringing in of foreign settlers etc. — will never bring stability to the region concerned, it constitutes a threat to security in the whole region of the Middle East and the Arab and Muslim World.

Under the prevailing conditions, no just peace settlement will be achieved unless the Arab countries overcome their present state of division and total political paralysis. The president of the IPO expressed the hope that the League of Arab States and the Organisation of Islamic Conference will define cohesive long-term strategies and policies for joint action to restore legitimate Arab and Muslim rights in Jerusalem, the capital of Palestine, and in Palestine and all other occupied Arab territories.

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PROGRAMME TWO

14:05 Flinstones
14:30 Cartoon — Adventures of the Rainbow Pond
15:00 French Programmes
16:00 America's Funniest People
16:25 Escape from Jupiter
16:50 Doc — Challenge
17:15 Border Town
18:00 French Programmes
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Comedy — Grace Under Fire
20:00 Children's Diary
20:30 Challenges
21:10 Drama — Spencer for Hire
22:00 News in English
22:25 Cobra
23:00 Hart to Hart

PRAYER TIMES

04:11 Fajr
05:28 Sunrise/Duha
11:41 Dhahr
15:11 Asr
17:54 Maghreb
19:12 Isha

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Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654952

Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Temperatures are expected to rise, skies sunny to partly cloudy, and winds easterly light to moderate. In Aqaba, winds will northerly moderate and seas calm.
Amman 01/13
Aqaba zero/15
Deserts 07/20
Jordan Valley 09/22
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 09, Aqaba 19

Humidity readings: Amman 64 per cent. Aqaba 50 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Khalil Al Tushiq 757253

Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 830432

Dr. Yahya Abdul Rahim 736072

Dr. Wafiq Qaddumi 893542

Firas pharmacy 661912

Ferdows pharmacy 890280

Al Asema pharmacy 637055

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 643945

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

Nairokh pharmacy 623672

Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir 276852

Al Quds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Walid Nabhan 995743

Khalif pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 617101

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 605800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101

Abdafi Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 515615

Electric Power Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalidi Maternity, 644281/6

Akileh Maternity, 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malhas, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 607071

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3

Al-Bashir, 775111/26

Army, Marika 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50

Amal Hospital 674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275

Ibn Al Nafees Hospital (02)247100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT
This information is supplied

by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified.

Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08 (52700) or 08(53250).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

07:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)

07:25 Damascus (RJ)

07:35 Larnaca (RJ)

08:35 Jeddah (RJ)

08:50 Dhab, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

14:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

16:35 Frankfurt (RJ)

16:45 Istanbul (RJ)

17:05 Paris (RJ)

17:50 Toronto, Montreal (RJ)

17:50 Brussels, Vienna (RJ)

18:10 London, Berlin (RJ)

18:10 Rome (RJ)

23:10 Beirut (RJ)

00:10 Cairo (RJ)

03:55 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

05:30 Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

08:35 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)

10:00 Sanaa, Hudaidah (Y)

10:30 Jeddah (SV)

12:40 Abu Dhabi (GF)

13:30 Tunis (TU)

15:05 Vienna (OS)

15:45 Algiers (AH)</



MUTA — HRH Princess Rahmah Bent Al Hassan distributes citations and awards to 27 participants in the Crown Prince Award competition at a ceremony held here. To the left of the Princess is Karak Governor Badr Din Wedian (Petra photo)

UNRWA denies it will impose fees on Palestinian children

AMMAN (J.T.) — The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Tuesday denied that it has imposed or intends to impose educational fees on Palestinian refugee children.

Referring to reports in the local press alleging that UNRWA plans to impose educational fees on students during the upcoming scholastic year, Omar Ghabayen, the agency's director of education, said that UNRWA reaffirms its commitment to provide free education to refugee children at both the primary and preparatory stages.

Last December, UNRWA Director of Operations Robert Hopkins maintained that the agency might have to resort to charging fees on educational and health services to Palestinian refugees should donor nations fail to meet the esti-

ated \$60 million deficit in the agency's 1997 fiscal budget.

Mr. Hopkins was quoted by Jordan News Agency, Petra as saying that the "560 million deficit gives UNRWA a new challenge in meeting social, educational and health obligations in its fields of operations and unless donations are forthcoming the agency will be forced to revise its current refugee services and impose fees on its beneficiaries."

In his statement Tuesday, Mr. Ghabayen said that Palestinian refugee children at the elementary level offer 700 fils annually as voluntary contribution to their schools for classroom educational aids while secondary school children offer JD 1.4 for same.

However, he stressed that these contributions are mainly symbolic and not

included in UNRWA's allocations for educational services.

UNRWA began operations in May 1950 and has been providing emergency assistance to Palestinian refugees of whom nearly 40 per cent live in Jordan.

The remainder live in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Lebanon and Syria.

The agency operates 10 refugee camps which house nearly 23 per cent of the registered refugees in the Kingdom and offers education to refugee children in more than 200 schools at the elementary and preparatory levels.

This month, UNRWA Commissioner General Peter Hansen has been touring the Gulf states but no word has yet been received regarding collections made during the tour.

Children killed in domestic accidents

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Two children were killed and a third was listed in critical condition Tuesday in three separate accidents in the Kingdom, official reports said.

In Balqa, a one-year-old child was killed after falling in a bucket of water, police reports said.

Samar Mohammad was rushed to Mo'adi Health Centre and died shortly afterwards, reports said.

In Irbid, Ibrahim Mahmoud, 4, was playing with the electric socket in his house and was electrocuted as a result, they added.

In a third incident, a three-year-old child, identified by police reports as Motaz Jamal, was hit by a trailer in a suburb of Amman.

The reports said that the child was rushed to a nearby hospital where he was listed in

critical condition.

It added that the driver of the trailer, identified only as A. Z., 26, was arrested pending further investigations.

Meanwhile, an act of vandalism by a group of 10-year old children in Ramtha caused a light electric wire to detach from a pole and fall, killing two goats grazing in the area, officials said.

A Civil Defence Department (CDD) official told the Jordan Times that the group of children, from Ramtha, were throwing rocks at the electric cables causing some of the wires to cut.

He added that the wires fell and electrocuted the pole where two nearby goats were electrocuted as a result.

"It was an odd but dangerous incident, and thank God none of the children were harmed," the CDD official said.

German string quartet performs in Amman

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Joachim Quartet flew in from Germany to Amman to give one of the finest string quartet performances the city has seen in years.

Volker Witzsch and Horst Pietsch on violin, Monika Huls on viola and Klaus Heitz on cello delighted an educated audience with a splendid choice of chamber music for strings. The event took place at the theatre of the New English School.

The ensemble started with a suite in E Minor by Franz Schubert. From the very first notes, the Joachim Quartet announced its class — flawless syn-

chronisation, perfect tempi and above all excellent coordination of the dynamics and articulation between the four members. They played together as one. The best was yet to come.

Schubert's suite was followed by the Quatuor Op.10 by French composer Claude Debussy. It was the evening's masterpiece. The slow movement more particularly allowed the audience to appreciate the amazing quality of the cello and the viola's timbre. In addition to the personal talent of these two performers, the very sound of their superbly crafted instruments was exceptionally beautiful.

However, although Debussy who died

in 1918 can hardly be considered as "contemporary" anymore, now that we are on the threshold of the twenty-first century, many in the audience found the Quatuor a little too modern, too difficult for them to understand. After the intermission, the Joachim Quartet travelled a little back in time and performed a quartet by Johannes Brahms.

Again, the piece was interpreted with the same virtuosity, taste and indisputable musicianship.

The concert was attended by HRH Princess Rania Al Abdullah and organised by the Goethe Institut in Amman and the Young Women's Christian Association.

Ministries should refrain from independently contacting donor organisations — premier

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Tuesday circulated instructions to all government departments and ministries requesting that they refrain from contacting international financial institutions, donor organisations and diplomatic missions as well as UN agencies in connection with financial aid or loans to finance their projects or to ask for additional grants and other forms of assistance.

A memorandum from the Prime Ministry said that only the Ministry of Planning is authorised to conduct such contacts and other departments should

approach this ministry as it serves as a liaison between Jordan and foreign agencies and governments to secure aid and loans.

The memorandum stated that the Ministry of Planning is the sole party authorised to sign agreements with donor parties or financial organisations.

Any violations of these regulations can only complicate procedures and weaken coordination in securing aid, it said.

Also Tuesday, Dr. Majali received Justice Najj Tarawneh, head of the Higher Judicial Council and the Supreme Court, and Justice Omar Abaza, head

of the Court of Cassation.

These officials, accompanied by the members of the higher judicial council, called to urge the government to support the judicial system in such a manner as would cater to the directives of His Majesty King Hussein in his letter of designation to Dr. Majali.

In response, the prime minister affirmed that the government would abide by the Royal directives and enable the judiciary authority to perform its duty and that he is determined to create the appropriate material and moral atmosphere for the justices to perform their duty.

Dr. Majali urged the judiciary to arrange for Jordanian judges to visit other countries and learn from their particular systems.

In his letter of response to the King last week, Dr. Majali maintained that his government would support the judicial authority and train new cadres.

"We realise your Majesty's concern over this issue as this can help lay the foundation of justice to fight off corruption so that people may be reassured of their rights," he said at the time.

President of the Amman Chamber of Industry Khalid Abu Hassan and

chamber council members Tuesday called on Dr. Majali and requested that the new government give priority to the Jordanian economy and cooperate more actively between the private and public sectors in economic affairs.

Responding to the request, Dr. Majali said that the government was determined to modernise the public administration system and decentralise in order to achieve progress.

In his letter to the King, Dr. Majali vowed to encourage investments and allocate a greater role to the private sector.

Workshop calls for child protection policies

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan needs effective support mechanisms, public awareness campaigns, and advancements in legislation and policies to address the increasing problem of child abuse, participants in a seminar on "Child abuse and protection" agreed Tuesday.

Though the Kingdom is currently addressing issues of maltreatment, child neglect and abuse, officials from various ministries, lawyers, police officers, and representatives from the United Nations (UN) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) called for further action.

"Everyday, more cases of child abuse are uncovered," HRH Princess Rania Abdullah said in the opening session of the workshop.

"The problem in Jordan is still manageable, and through the establishment of the suitable support mechanisms, public awareness campaigns, education of the public and professionals in matters relating to children, advancements in law, justice and public policy... we can and will improve the quality of life for children everywhere in the

Kingdom," Princess Rania told participants.

Defining child abuse as "an unseen crime that cuts across the social and economic divide... and is committed against the most vulnerable and innocent members of our community," Princess Rania pointed to a "general unwillingness" in Arab societies to disclose and address the problem openly because of misconceptions and fears.

Child abuse "is often concealed because of social taboos and misunderstood perceptions of honour and shame in our society," she said.

The three-day workshop, organised by the Jordan River for Development Projects (JRDP) in cooperation with the British Council, Jordan and the British embassy in Amman, is aimed at training a key group of professionals to identify, respond and prevent different forms of child abuse.

Senior lecturer in primary education, Dominic Wyse and Deputy Director of the School of Health Angela Hatwin, both from Liverpool John Moores University, are, as facilitators in the workshop, leading the various group activities

and providing participants with plenty of informative sessions.

Topics to be discussed during the workshop include: categorisation of physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect; recognition of different kinds of abuse; identification of predisposing factors in child abuse, such as gender, age, poverty and family structure; short and long term effects of abuse; strategies for disclosure; referral, investigation and support mechanisms.

In a speech at the opening ceremony, British Ambassador to Jordan Peter Hinchcliffe said that "more and more" cases of child abuse have recently been brought to the surface, "despite the great sensitivity of this important issue."

Praising Jordan for "setting a lead within the region in facing up to causes of domestic violence and child abuse," Mr. Hinchcliffe congratulated Princess Rania, president of the JRDP, "for her great efforts" in tackling the problem of child abuse, "especially as the JRDP is the first organisation to work solely for the protection of children and the prevention of child abuse."

Highlighting Jordanian-British cooperation in addressing the "dif-

ferent challenges to police and social agencies," presented by "the increasing number of cases of violence against women and children," Mr. Hinchcliffe recalled his government's support for exchange visits of Jordanian and British police officers and the establishment of the Jordanian Women's Union Violence against Women's Counselling Hotline.

Referring to His Majesty King Hussein's initiative this month to donate the Hashemite Palace to the orphaned children of the Al Hussein Welfare Institute, Director of the British Council, Jordan David Burton said "courageous attention to socially and culturally sensitive issues has characterised the Kingdom, and the rights of the child, including prevention of child abuse, have recently been vividly focused upon by His Majesty."

Dr. Burton also called on participants to elaborate "specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound deliberation."

The workshop is expected to produce an action plan for a selected group of professionals, practitioners and policy makers.

Ministry announces children's theatre festival

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Culture, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Ministry of Education, the Jordanian Artists Association and the Haya Arts Centre.

Various other government departments will benefit from the shows later in order to ensure that the greatest number of children might benefit thereof, she said.

The higher committee organising the festival groups representatives of the Ministry of Culture, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Ministry of Education, the Jordanian Artists Association and the Haya Arts Centre.

The event is aimed at supporting and encouraging children's theatre activities as well as the spirit of constructive competition, she added.

The upcoming event is aimed to help writers, directors and scriptwriters and others involved in children's theatre to pool their resources and bolster contacts, research and studies in presenting meaningful and constructive plays for children, she said.

Auxiliary to the festival, seminars will be held in which participants might

discuss children-related theatre activities.

Ms. Qousus also noted that her department is planning to participate in this year's international children's books exhibition, scheduled to be held in Italy next month.

Jordan will be displaying 250 books at that time, she said.

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What's Going On

CHILD ABUSE WORKSHOP

* A 3-day workshop on "Child Abuse and Protection" at the Jordan Inter-Continental Hotel (25-27 March). The workshop aims at training a key group of people on how to identify, respond, and prevent child abuse.

LECTURES

* Lectures by seven German engineers on mechanical and electrical engineering, as well as industry at the Professional Associations Complex, Shmeisani at 10:00 a.m.

* "The National Kurdish Cause in Iraq and its Contemporary Ramifications" (in Arabic) by Dr. Majid Abdul Rida at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

* "Azraq Wet Land/Back to Life" by Dr. Gail Pariz at the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature office, Jubeiliah at 6:00 p.m. (Tel. 847411).

DAY TWO

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF HER ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCESS RANIA AL-ABDULLAH

JORDAN RIVER FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Is organizing a fund raising campaign:-

Cloths, toys, books, non-perishable foods, monetary contributions and anything that will put a smile on a child's face will be collected

From March 25 until April 3, 1997
Between 8:00am - 7:00pm

Donated gifts could be sent to one of the following locations:-
Jordan River Designs showroom (See map), Al Ahlia Abela - McDonald's (Mecca St.) - Iman Early Learning Center (Abdoun) - Safeway - Fakherdin Restaurant - Aramex (Mecca St./Infront of Dahiat Al Hussien)

Or you can deposit your contribution to:-
A special Jordan River For Development Projects' bank account number 48/50493/20 At The Arab Jordan Investment Bank

Following, allocated funds will be distributed all over the kingdom between April 6 until April 15, 1997
 An account of what is contributed will appear daily in local newspapers

We hope you will join us in making this Eid one to remember for our needy children, even if it means a sacrifice.

For further information call 613081 or Fax 613083

Notes:
 - Items should be clean and in a good condition
 - When sending a parcel, kindly attach a brief description with a recommended age or size.

The English Patient takes lion's share of Oscars

LOS ANGELES (R) — The independent film, *The English Patient*, took the lion's share of the Oscars Monday night, walking away with nine Academy Awards including best picture and best director.

In the acting categories however, the World War II romance set in the Sahara Desert had to make do with best supporting actress for Juliette Binoche.

Best actor went to Geoffrey Rush for his portrayal of Australian pianist David Helfgott in *Shine* while Frances McDormand took best actress for her portrayal of a pregnant police chief in the gritty crime drama *Fargo*.

"What am I doing here," McDormand said in accepting her Oscar, "especially considering the extraordinary group of women with whom I was nominated."

"We five women were fortunate to have the choice, not just the opportunity, but the choice to play such rich complex female characters and I congratulate casting directors for making decisions on qualifications and not just marketing value," she added.

McDormand beat out Brenda Blethyn (*Secrets and Lies*), Diane Keaton (*Marvin's Room*), Kristin Scott Thomas (*The English Patient*) and Emily Watson (*Breaking The Waves*).

Rush triumphed over Tom Cruise (*Jerry Maguire*), Ralph Fiennes (*The English Patient*), Woody Harrelson (*The People Vs. Larry Flynt*) and Billy Bob Thornton (*Sling Blade*).

It was a night of double honours for veteran producer Saul Zaentz at the 69th Annual Awards celebration presented by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. In addition to winning best picture for *The English Patient*, he was presented with the Irving G. Thalberg Award for his considerable body of work.

The English Patient also won Oscars for best art direction, best cinematography, best costume design, best film editing, best original dramatic score and best sound, and tied as the third highest winning Oscar movie in history along with *Gigi* and *The Last Emperor*. Ben Hur is the Oscar champion, taking 11 in 1959. *West Side Story* took home

10 awards in 1961.

Oscar night was also independent studios taking seven of the eight major awards.

Of the major studios, only Tristar came away with a top Oscar, with Cuba Gooding Jr. winning best supporting actor for his role as a struggling professional football player in *Jerry Maguire*.

In his role, Gooding came out with one of the most popular movie sayings of the season when he said to sports agent Jerry Maguire, played by Cruise, "show me the money."

Binoche, a French-born actress who has made films in both her native language and in English, and who was a first-time Oscar nominee, paid homage to the woman many had expected to take the best supporting actress award — veteran actress Lauren Bacall for her role in *The Mirror Has Two Faces*.

"It's true, I didn't prepare anything. I thought Lauren was going to get it and she deserves it," Binoche said in thanking the academy for her Oscar.

It was Bacall's first nomination and many saw her as the sentimental favourite after a long career in films. Madonna, denied a nomi-

nation for her role in *Evita* as Eva Peron, the wife of Argentine strongman Juan Peron, received a warm welcome from the glittering audience as she sang the film's show-stopper, *You Must Love Me*, by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice, which won the best song award.

Also present in a gold-plated wheelchair was Larry Flynt, the controversial publisher of *Hustler* magazine and the subject of the film, *The People Vs. Larry Flynt*, for which Harrelson, who portrayed Flynt, was up for best actor.

Boxing great Muhammad Ali received a standing ovation when he took the stage with George Foreman, his opponent in a world heavyweight title bout in *Zaire* featured in *When We Were Kings*, which won for best documentary feature.

Another ovation was given to Helfgott, who played some of the music from *Shine*.

The politically charged film *Kolya*, from the Czech Republic, received the best foreign film Oscar.

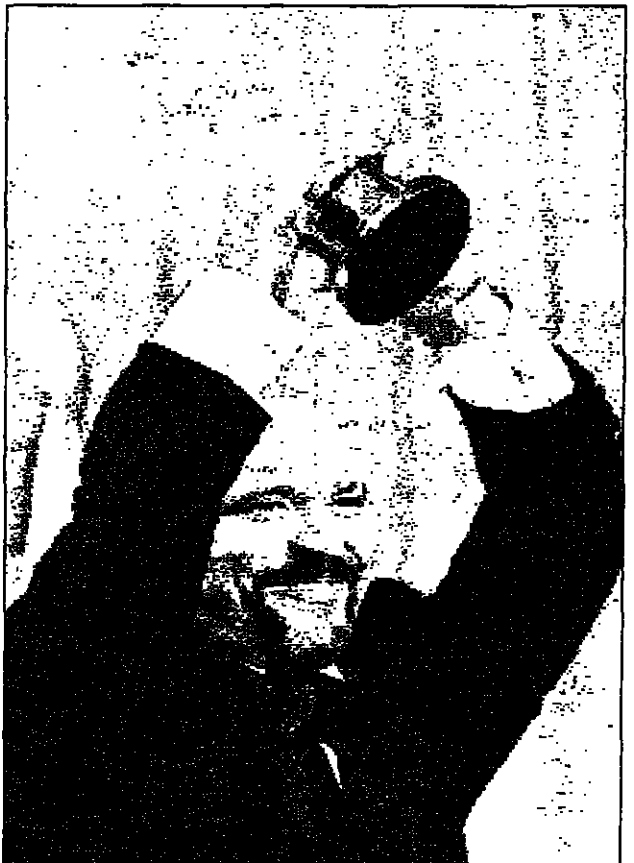
"*Kolya*" tells of the reawakening of an ageing cellist as he and a Russian boy journey through the Czech countryside on the eve of Prague's Velvet Revolution in 1989.



Actor Cuba Gooding Jr. tosses his Oscar in the air backstage at the Academy Awards after he won for Best Supporting Actor for the film, *Jerry Maguire* Monday. A thrilled Gooding accepted the award and then broke into a frenzied dance onstage that recalled a scene from the film (Reuter photo)



Actress Juliette Binoche holds her Oscar for best supporting actress backstage at the 69th annual Academy Awards Monday. Binoche won the award for the film, *The English Patient* (Reuter photo)



Anthony Minghella holds up his best director Oscar backstage at the Academy Awards Monday. Minghella won for the film, *The English Patient* (Reuter photo)

Hong Kong's Tung loses ground in opinion polls

HONG KONG (R) — A decision by Hong Kong's future leader Tung Chee-hwa to put a property tycoon in charge of housing policy has dented his popularity, a Hong Kong newspaper poll published Tuesday showed.

A telephone poll conducted by the Ming Pao Monday asked 565 people to rate Tung's ability and credibility on a scale of one to nine, with nine the top mark.

Mr. Tung, who will step into Governor Chris Patten's shoes when the British colony reverts to China on July 1, scored 4.88 points for ability, a drop of more than one point since a similar survey on Feb. 24.

He scored 4.85 points for credibility, down from 5.7 points last month.

The independent Chinese-language paper attributed the decline to Mr. Tung's appointment of property surveyor and real estate consultant Leung Chun-ying as head of a committee to map out housing strategy.

Politicians, both from the pro-democracy camp and the pro-Beijing big business lobby, have denounced Leung's appointment as a potential conflict of interest.

Critics have complained on radio talk shows and in newspaper correspondence columns, traditional outlets for public dissatisfaction. A small group of demonstra-

tors picketed his office Monday.

Housing is a sensitive issue in tiny, crowded Hong Kong where costs are among the highest in the world and have made owning a home a pipe dream for many young families.

"Clearly, there is a conflict of interest for Leung Chun-ying to formulate Hong Kong's long-term housing policy," the Hong Kong Economic Times said Tuesday.

With 98 days to go until Hong Kong is handed over to China, Mr. Tung is facing his first real test of handling public opinion since being appointed leader-in-waiting by a committee vetted by

Beijing in December.

Mr. Tung's decision last week to allocate "portfolios" to members of his executive council, or inner cabinet of advisers, broke with tradition and ruffled some feathers.

Previous governors picked their Executive Council members from all walks of life to tap a range of expertise but did not hand out specific responsibilities.

Mr. Tung, an experienced business tycoon but political novice, has been racing against the clock to form an administration and come to terms with the world of politics in preparation for taking on Gov. Patten's mantle.

Annan leaves Angola optimistic about peace process

LUANDA (AFP) — U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan was due to leave Angola Tuesday having received assurances from UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi that his party would join in the formation of a new unity government and honour the peace process.

Prior to his departure early Tuesday, Mr. Annan met with a group of UNITA deputies who, for the first time since the 1994 peace accords were signed, were due to sit in parliament.

The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) gained 70 seats in elections in 1992, but they remained vacant when the civil war resumed.

UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi, Mr. Annan received assurances that the deputies would sit in parliament and that UNITA cabinet members would be arriving in Luanda by Wednesday.

No date was set, however, on the formation of a government of unity and national reconciliation.

The peace accords allowed Mr. Savimbi to appoint four government ministers and seven junior ministers.

Mr. Savimbi's change of heart came after receiving assurances from the government over a number of key issues, including the creation of a special status for the former rebel leader.

The breakthrough an-

nouncement led Mr. Annan to say afterwards: "I am convinced that the main obstacle to peace has been lifted."

"We are on the last lap of a very long race," Mr. Annan later told members of a joint commission for the implementation of the peace accords, signed in Lusaka, Zambia, in November 1994.

But Foreign Minister Venancio De Moura warned Mr. Annan to be cautious about Mr. Savimbi's pledges and to impose, if necessary, U.N. sanctions against the former rebel movement.

Despite the sudden lurch forward in the political arena, there has been little

progress on the military side.

Integration of the former UNITA troops into the new national army is slow, with only 7,000 men joining out of an expected 26,300.

To make matters worse, the demobilisation of some 100,000 former soldiers is still only in its initial phase.

The country is also in need of \$230 million to assist the former soldiers along with the displaced and refugees.

Mr. Annan was due in Lome Tuesday for the special Organisation of African Unity (OAU) summit on Zaire and the Great Lakes region.

Botched plan spares teenagers in Canada doomsday cult death pact

MONTREAL (AFP) —

Three teenagers who survived one botched group suicide attempt were spared a second pact in which their parents and three other doomsday cult members died, police said Monday.

Late Saturday the bodies of three women and two men were discovered when fire-fighters put out a blaze at a wood-frame home in rural Quebec.

But if suicide plans originally made for Thursday to coincide with the spring equinox by the members of the Order of the Solar Temple had proceeded as planned, "there would be eight deaths instead of five," Real Ouellet, spokesman for the Quebec Provincial Police, said Monday.

The 13- and 16-year-old boys and a 14-year-old girl were the children of Didier Queze and Chantal Goupillot, owners of the house where the grisly discovery of the bodies was made.

"There was a discussion Saturday between the parents and the children, and the children decided not to die," Mr. Ouellet said.

Mr. Ouellet said the teens took sleeping pills so that they would not have to witness the collective suicide.

The incident had all the hallmarks of a chain of cult murder-suicides in Switzerland, France and Canada.

Mr. Ouellet said the group's "journey" was originally set for Thursday because that night marked the spring equinox. But for unknown reasons the house did not catch fire.

When the teenagers woke up Friday and discovered among them incendiary devices, they realised the fate that had been planned for them, Mr. Ouellet said.

"They realized a 'journey' was being planned for them that they didn't want to go on," Mr. Ouellet added.

Police identified the victims as Queze, 39, a dual French and Canadian citizen; Goupillot, his 41-year-old wife, also dual French and Canadian; her French mother, Suzanne Druau, 63; Pauline Rioux, 54, Canadian; and Bruno Klaus, 49, Swiss, Canadian dual nationality.

Authorities said fire-fighters discovered four of the bodies stretched out on a bed on the second story in the form of a cross.

Autopsies will take place Tuesday and Wednesday, police said.

About an hour after the fire began, the three teenagers walked out of a workshop behind the house.

The three are believed to be the first survivors of the

group suicides, dating back to 1994, among followers of the Order of the Solar Temple cult in Switzerland, France and Canada.

They were placed in the custody of a local child protective services agency, and were expected to return to the care of their paternal grandparents in Le Havre, northwestern France.

Joelle Vernay, a lawyer involved in a previous case involving the same sect, said the three children had lived in Canada with their parents for eight years, but had no other family there.

The building had been booby-trapped. Fire-fighters found two propane containers attached to electric wires and there was evidence of accelerants — possibly petrol — around the scene.

A total of 53 members of the cult are known to have died in Quebec and Switzerland in 1994. Forty-eight of the casualties were found in a farm house and three chalets in Switzerland; the remaining five were discovered in a burned house in Morin Heights, near Montreal, within hours of the discovery of the Swiss bodies.

In 1995, another 16 members of the cult were found dead in a forest clearing near Grenoble, in the French Alps.

Australians appeal for euthanasia delay

CANBERRA (R) —

Australian pro-euthanasia campaigners made a last-ditch plea Tuesday to delay abolition of the world's first euthanasia law so two terminally ill people could use it to die before it was consigned to history.

Australia's Upper House of Parliament voted 38 to 33 in the early hours of Tuesday to reject the law that came into operation in the outback northern territory last year to allow terminally ill people to die with the help of a doctor.

The anti-euthanasia bill, which had already been passed by the Lower House of Parliament, now needs only to be formally signed into law by Governor-General Sir William Deane.

Leading euthanasia campaigner Dr. Phillip Nitschke, who has helped all four people who died under the law, said two more patients wrote to Sir William for him to delay his signature so they could kill themselves legally.

"The patients will be asking for that in a statement to the governor-general today," Dr. Nitschke told Reuters. "They would ask for there to be some delay perhaps for a week or two," he said.

A dejected Nitschke said he was disgusted by the efforts of those supporting the anti-euthanasia bill in the senate to try to accelerate the bill's signing into law.

"The same callous disregard that was being shown last night is being demonstrated in the sense that they're now calling on the governor-general to sign it as fast as possible," he said.

The four people who have legally killed themselves since the law came into effect in July used a computer-controlled machine that injected a lethal drug. The first was 66-year-old cancer sufferer Bob Dent, who

died in September.

Euthanasia has remained illegal in the rest of Australia but supporters and opponents agree that it is widely practised.

The vote to strike down the territory law ignored the 75 per cent majority of Australians who back euthanasia but Prime Minister John Howard defended his right-to-life stand.

"I know that my view is probably a minority view in the community (and) I'm only just on balance against euthanasia," he said in a radio interview.

"I guess I was influenced by what could be called the slippery-slope view — that once you start down the path of legally sanctioning a positive act to terminate somebody's life you have so altered the character of society ... That you wonder what the next step will be," Mr. Howard said.

Dr. Nitschke said it was too late for the two patients to kill themselves legally unless there was a delay in signing the bill into law. He would not say whether the patients would take their own lives regardless of the quashing of the law.

A parliamentary officer said it usually took a day or so to go through the administrative process of preparing the bill and getting the governor-general to give it "the royal assent" on behalf of Britain's Queen Elizabeth, Australia's head of state.

Argument in the heated debate continued to rage over the nation's airwaves on talk-back radio shows on then, rang to say he was happy the euthanasia law had been rejected.

"I'm totally opposed to euthanasia because it involves bringing in a third person in on your self-destruction. That's the most abhorrent, contemptible thing that you can do," he said, his voice shaking with emotion.

Belarus steps back in expulsions row with Washington

MINSK (R) — The

of Belarus took a step in his row with the United States over the expulsion of an American diplomat, saying he wanted to strengthen relations with Washington.

"President Lukashenko underlined the importance of widening cooperation with the United States," said Belarus had ended political will to strengthen cooperation with the United States despite some difficulties," state television said late Monday.

"We don't want people to say that there was an anti-American campaign in Belarus," Mr. Lukashenko was quoted as saying during a meeting with the newly-appointed Belarus ambassador to the United States Valery Tsepkalo.

The expulsion of Sergei Alexandrov, a first secretary at the U.S. embassy in Minsk, prompted U.S. protests and a response from Belarus earlier Monday that Washington was behaving disrespectfully towards the impoverished former Soviet Republic.

Mr. Alexandrov was arrested at an opposition rally where clashes broke out Sunday, and told to leave the country within 24 hours. The deadline expired Monday evening but it was not clear whether he had actually gone.

In a further sign that Belarus was moderating its stance, Belarussian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Khvostov was quoted by the television as saying Belarus had no negative attitudes towards "such a powerful state" as the United States.

Mr. Khvostov said that the decision was aimed against a particular U.S. diplomat, who "behaved not in a bad manner."

Washington said Monday it might retaliate for the expulsion. Acting State Department spokesman John Dinger told reporters in Washington that Mr. Alexandrov had been detained despite having clearly identified himself as a diplomat.

"He was not immediately released despite the intervention of other U.S. diplomats present at the scene. And he was not shown the respect due to an official representative of the United States Department of State," Mr. Dinger said.

"All of these actions constitute serious violations of normal diplomatic practice," he added.

Last week Washington announced it had cut off \$40 million in aid to the country of 10 million because of its human rights record.

Relations have been strained since Belarussian armed forces shot down a sports balloon, killing two American pilots, in 1995.

State television also read out Monday evening a Foreign Ministry statement defending the withdrawal of accreditation for Alexander Stupnikov, a reporter for the Russian NTV channel.

The statement said Mr. Stupnikov, an Israeli citizen, had made "systematic distortion of information about our country."

"(His reports) led to dissemination of public opinion in Belarus and Russia," it added.

Belarussian authorities have repeatedly accused Russian media of biased reporting and for several days have prevented them from sending television pictures from Minsk TV Centre to Moscow.

Olga Tomashevskaya, a reporter for Russia's Kommersant daily in Minsk, said foreign journalists would deliver and official protest and picket near the Foreign Ministry "to defend Mr. Stupnikov and freedom of press and information."

Jordan Times

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Restoring mission

THE U.N. Commission on Human Rights' current session in Geneva offers yet another occasion to make a fresh assessment of the working of the commission and its viability. The 53-member body is in effect the umbrella international forum for the consideration of human rights issues worldwide. Created by the U.N. Economic and Social Council to review and develop the global human rights cause, the commission succeeded in some areas but failed in others especially where it counts most. Where the human rights body registered great gains was over the continuous codification of the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. Where the body has remarkably failed was over its selective treatment of human rights violations.

Manned by representatives of countries the majority of which are among the gravest human rights violators, the commission has not been able to apply evenhandedness in passing judgments on U.N. member states. The crux of the problem lies in the selection of the commission's members. Typical of other U.N. bodies, countries manage to get elected to the commission by horse-trading with one another. The criteria for membership has never centred on the human rights record of candidate countries. The end result is a body composed of states which are themselves prime human rights violators. When the culprits become the judges, the mission of the commission becomes warped, twisted and lopsided.

Member states also engage in behind the scene deals where delegates exchange votes on major issues facing the commission. The picture that emerges from the annual deliberations of the commission is not one that human rights advocates can feel proud about or satisfied with. So when the commission's special rapporteur on Iraq submits his annual condemnatory report, we can see how the commission is once again overtly selective in its treatment of human rights situations across the board. Not that we wish to defend the Iraqi human rights record. Far from it. We will be the first to admit that the human rights situation in that Arab country is still unacceptable. But what concerns us also is the record of so many other countries on human rights that noticeably escape the scrutiny of the commission mainly because of political considerations.

We believe that it is high time that the commission's methods of work be reviewed and reconsidered. Likewise we believe that its composition also calls for reconsideration. We would like to see its membership confined to countries which provide the greatest measures to the protection of human rights. We would also like to see an end to the current voting pattern by resorting to secret voting. The commission must also be able to hold two annual sessions instead of one in view of the fact that the cause of human rights is increasingly deteriorating worldwide. The new secretary general of the U.N. has been chosen especially to overhaul the entire U.N. system. The respected Amnesty International has recently criticised the commission for being ineffective in its mission. Perhaps the secretary general should call on the highly respected Amnesty to help reform the U.N. body.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL DUSTOUR daily Tuesday described as blackmail Benjamin Netanyahu's conditions imposed on the Palestinians and demanded that the Arab countries must rally behind the Palestinian leadership and support its struggle to end Israel's occupation. The Israeli prime minister is demanding that the Palestinians and the Israelis discuss security issues rather than continue talks on political matters, and the redeployment of Israeli forces in Palestinian lands, said the paper. The Israelis are punishing the Palestinians for their resistance to the occupation forces and for their opposition to the building of a Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem, it added. The paper said that while the world is looking on and doing nothing to help the Palestinians, the Arab states are duty-bound to come to the help of their Palestinian brothers and sisters in their quest to regain freedom. The paper said if the Arab and Muslim states fail to respond to the immediate needs of the Palestinians, no one should expect help from other countries.

SAMIR Q'AMIL, a writer for Al Ra'i, said Tuesday that given the technocrats and pragmatists serving as ministers in the government of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, one should expect a brighter future for the country. The King's letter of designation to the new prime minister clearly pointed to the rampant corruption in Jordan's circles, the inefficiency of the public administration and the failure of the previous government to deal with the pressing economic issues, noted the writer. He said that though no one expects miracles from the new government, serious efforts can be expected towards addressing the numerous ills. Observers believe that at least 90 per cent of the new ministers are competent, efficient and of proven integrity and they are quite capable of handling the questions at hand, he added. The writer said that while admitting that the previous government failed to improve Jordan's national economy and deal with the pressing poverty and unemployment questions, one cannot expect the present government to find solutions to all problems. However, he said, some urgent measures should be taken to stop the deterioration and place the country's economy back on track.

The Washington Watch

The bombing in Tel Aviv — 'morally unjustifiable, politically stupid'

By Dr. James J. Zogby

THE SUICIDE bombing in Tel Aviv is a condemnable act. It is unjustifiable on moral grounds. And it is politically stupid as well.

On what possible basis can one excuse the slaughter of three innocent people whose only crime was to be in the wrong place at the wrong time?

To argue that this act was in response to the settlement being constructed on Jabal Abu Ghneim is preposterous. Were those killed and wounded responsible for the settlement? Will their deaths and injuries now stop the construction?

Does one expect Israeli public opinion, which was leaning against construction at Abu Ghneim, to now rise up and demand that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu quit bulldozing? Or does anyone actually believe that Netanyahu's reaction to the bombing will be an admission that he was wrong and, as a result, announce a reversal of his government's policy?

Since the answers to all of the above are a resounding "no", it is incredible to hear some analysts actually find grounds on which to explain the bombing as a justifiable response to Israeli policy.

At best, the suicide bombing was an act of despair and anger. But despair and anger are apolitical and destructive. Acts based on these emotions rather than on strategic thinking can lead to negative and devastating consequences.

For weeks now, the Netanyahu government has been under serious international pressure. Israel has been isolated, and even at odds with the U.S., its main patron. Conversely, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has been progressively growing in international stature. Despite the absence of any significant leverage, the PNA has been able to mobilise substantial international pressure and develop a more or less unified Arab stand against

Israeli policies.

The bombing in Tel Aviv threatens to erase some of these political gains. For a while, at least, Netanyahu will gain some international sympathy. And Palestinian President Yasser Arafat will be put in a defensive posture. Israeli public opinion, which had been deeply divided over the construction of the settlement, will once again be prey to emotional anti-Palestinian insecurities.

In all of this, the real campaign of the young Palestinian demonstrators in Bethlehem and Hebron and the courageous stand of Faisal Hussein and his non-violent protests in Jerusalem will be overlooked. They, if anyone, were the real heroes in the battle for the Holy City.

To make matters worse, Netanyahu can now return to playing a media role in which he feels quite comfortable. He will be transformed from the arrogant anti-peace bully to the outraged defender of a people victimised by terror.

Next to those who have died, it is, of course, the Palestinian people who will pay the greatest price. The Israeli government has once again intensified closure and the resulting deprivation of economic, social and medical services will take a huge toll on an already beleaguered society. How many will die? How many will suffer?

Netanyahu has been strangling the peace process since his election. The bomber has given him the justification to now finish the job.

Like the Jordanian soldier, who in another act cost his government its claim to the moral high-ground, the bomber in Tel Aviv and those who sent him on his way have dramatically transformed an already bad situation and made it worse.

These acts have played into the hands of Netanyahu and his far-right coalition's efforts to discredit not only the Palestinian leadership but the very idea of peace with

the Palestinian people.

Netanyahu has built his entire career on acts such as these. They are what helped him to international prominence in the 1970s and then elected him as prime minister in the 1990s.

He will, no doubt, use this bombing to further justify his agenda of radically transforming the peace process.

We can argue until we are blue in the face that such a terrorist bombing was "inevitable" or "expected" in the face of Israeli arrogance and violations of Palestinian rights. But was the act morally justifiable or politically wise? To these questions we can only give one answer.

In the end, other than the death of three Israelis, more insecurity in Israel, a stronger hand for the Netanyahu government, a more beleaguered PNA and more pain and suffering for the entire Palestinian people, what else did the bombing accomplish?

LETTERS

Reassessing U.S. policy

To the Editor:

AS AN American living in the Middle East, I am constantly questioned regarding the position of the United States vis-à-vis the Palestinians and Israelis. I am, unfortunately, most often placed in a defensive position in attempting to justify my country's support for the Israeli government and our failure to recognise the full rights of the Palestinians.

These issues have become magnified in recent days, particularly with the decision by Israeli government to expand its settlements in the West Bank. The veto of the United Nations' Security Council resolution by the United States has reinforced doubts amongst Arabs regarding the role of my nation as an "honest broker" in mediating the peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians.

What concerns me the most about American policy towards the continuing Palestinian-Israeli conflict is that it is difficult to rationalise my country's policies. During my postgraduate studies I specialised in international relations and American foreign policy. I prided myself in being an expert on the dynamics of American relations with other nations. As a student of Hans Morgenthau, I adopted a "realpolitik" approach towards world politics, and believed that nations, for the most part, pursued policies which enhanced their specific interests: political, economic, strategic, etc.

I understand that the position of the United States regarding the Middle East has been influenced by other external and internal considerations. During the cold war era, American policies reflected the larger concern with neutralising actions taken by the Soviet Union. Therefore, the pro-Israeli stance of my country was viewed as a counterweight to Russian support of Arab states, most notably Egypt (until 1973), Iraq and Syria.

I also acknowledged the important role American public opinion played in influencing our policies. The media in the United States has wholeheartedly supported the Israelis, and this has been enhanced by the power of political lobbyists.

Despite the above, it has never been clear to me why in the post-Soviet period the United States has continued to support Israel to the detriment of Palestinian interests. A nation's foreign policy should represent the pursuit of policies which enhance its interests. In the Middle East these interests revolve around one basic concern: petroleum reserves controlled by the Arab states. All other issues, in my view, become of secondary importance. Oil, as demonstrated in 1973-1974, can seriously impact the international economic order. In light of this reality, American foreign policy should be primarily concerned with ensuring positive relations with the major oil producers and avoiding positions which could alienate these countries. It is evident that the Arab states place a critical importance on the plight of the Palestinians and they react strongly against what they perceive as American bias towards Israel.

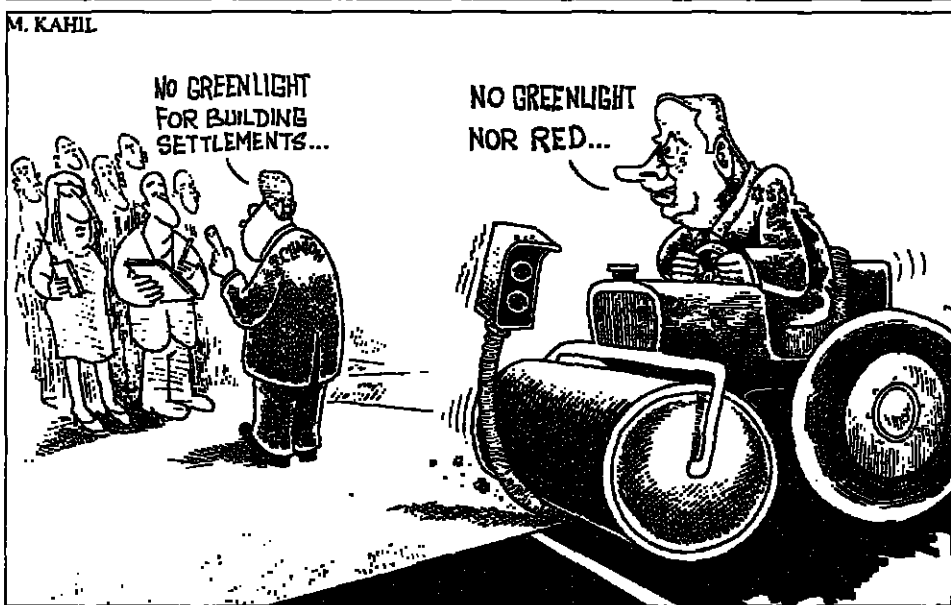
Given the obvious reasons for the United States to adopt a more even-handed approach towards the Middle East, one must question whether implementing such a change is possible. Israeli influence within my country is very strong and diverse. Public opinion continues to be manipulated by the media, and electoral politics are largely controlled by funding provided by pro-Israeli lobbies. Supporters of Israel are well-positioned within the executive and legislative branches of the American government, something reinforced by the appointment of Madeleine Albright as secretary of state.

In order to realign American foreign policy to more realistically reflect American interests, I would suggest that all those in a position to influence such a change take refresher courses in American Foreign Policy 101. I would further recommend they read (or reread) "Politics Among Nations" by Hans Morgenthau, which is considered the primer on international relations and American foreign policy from a "realpolitik" perspective. Once they have completed these assignments, I would question them as to whether they truly believe that American positions vis-à-vis the Palestinians and Israel are in the best interests of the United States or, conversely, whether such positions ultimately jeopardise American influence in this region.

It is most unfortunate that during a time when the United States has no rivals for influencing events in the Middle East, this nation continues to pursue short-sighted policies. In my opinion, the Arab states are willing to accept American hegemony in this area, but only when and if the United States develops and implements a more even-handed policy which is reflective of the concerns of the majority of peoples in this region.

During the next critical days and weeks, let us pray that President Bill Clinton can seize the initiative and pressure the Israelis to honour their commitments towards normalising relations with the Palestinians, including respecting the rights of their people.

Bill Ennenbach,
Amman.



Har Homa — the tip of the iceberg

By Jon Immanuel

The writer is a member of The Jerusalem Post editorial staff. The article below is reprinted from The Jerusalem Post.

THE VIEW from the hilltop is bleak. Relations between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) stand on the brink of the unknown, because Israel plans to bulldoze Har Homa for housing, and the PNA says the action will end the peace process.

Both sides have climbed a hill, neither seems interested in climbing down — but for Yasser Arafat there is little motivation to do so. The peace process is in his hands.

David Bar-Ilan, policy adviser to the prime minister, warns that no government can give in to threats of violence. Yet the threat lies in the situation the government has created.

Nobody was about to grab the area from Israel. Har Homa is a hill which has not seen human habitation since Joshua entered the "promised land". It could have been developed 20 years ago; and it could be developed two years from now. It just cannot be developed quietly over the next 27 months, until the end of permanent status talks. That is the entire issue.

Furthermore, the buildings that start rising over the next year, during the talks, will be completed too late to influence Israel's hold on southeast Jerusalem. Without visible gain, the government is tempting violence, because the Palestinians can see as well as anyone else that Israel will not escape all responsibility for it. The entire world except the U.S. and the South Sea parishes of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands voted

against Israel in the U.N. General Assembly because of Har Homa.

It is not true that anywhere Israel builds the Palestinians will cry "provocation". There are many places in Jerusalem where 2,500 housing units can be built in the next two years. Israel is currently building 2,000 more homes in Ma'aleh Adumim, well inside the Palestinian-controlled West Bank, and no one is marching.

The problem is that Har Homa — new, highly visible, spanning the issues of Jerusalem and settlements — "is the tip of the iceberg. If we didn't see it above the water we could ignore it, but because we see it, we cannot ignore what is beneath the surface as well," says Oslo negotiator Ahmad Qurei.

The choice is to stop Har Homa, or bring every other submerged dispute to the surface of Palestinian political consciousness.

Oslo permits Israel to take a unilateral decision to build on Har Homa only if each article is not read as part of a whole that emphasises coordination, liaison and cooperation "to provide for a smooth implementation..."

It will do the government no good to blame Arafat if violence erupts. He can always hide the smoking gun. "Arafat is in control, but not in total control," senior security sources said last week.

But if there is no violence, Arafat will reap praise for keeping the peace.

In a climate where 40 per cent of those asked in a Bethlehem-based poll last week said they supported suicide attacks against Israelis, those ardent to blow themselves up or shoot-and-run for God and country will feel less self-restraint.

Psychiatrists point out that nothing appeals more to the lonely lunatic than mass murder for a cause greater than his own mental problem. The Israeli-Palestinian problem is the cause.

In a state of open animosity his act will win him praise from many, understanding from many more, and guarantee him a tiny place in history, if not in the next world.

What the psychiatrists fail to explain, however, is why an ostensibly sane government would go out of its way to create an open season for lunatics.

Short-term peace in the coalition or the need to show a different coloration from the previous government cannot explain it. Netanyahu will bring neither peace nor security, and terror attacks, seemingly provoked by the government, will make his government look worse than Labour's.

But suppose the months of building on Har Homa pass with nothing more serious than weekly protest marches. Suppose, in addition, that the Palestinians sit down at the negotiating table. Will we then have called Arafat's bluff?

Not at all. Arafat will be seen as a man who has finally earned a Nobel Peace Prize in his own right, and not just as Israel's supporting actor. Indeed, he will be the saviour of the peace process. Netanyahu will be pushing; but Arafat will be leading him where he wants to go.

The transformation in Arafat's persona will be more remarkable than the one wrought by the Oslo accords, which saved him from the brink of oblivion. He will actually look like a head of state, and in the end that's what he will be.

Pan-Arab meeting in Casablanca calls for freezing of ties with Israel

By Maria Bizri
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Seventh Pan-Arab Conference has urged Arab and Islamic nations to take a firm stance against Israeli settlement policies, to stop normalisation and cut all ties with Israel.

The conference, which was held in Casablanca March 19-21, called on the international community to shoulder its responsibility towards the Holy City's identity and its shrines.

Participants formed four committees to discuss major problems facing the Arab World.

The first committee dealt with pan-Arab relations, the second with pan-Arab relations and the third with regional development and the fourth and final committee dealt with relations between the state and society.

"The conference is an open community conference which aims at achieving unity and freedom in the Arab World," said Hani Dahleh, board member of the Jordanian branch of the Arab Organisation for Human Rights.

Mr. Dahleh, who attended the conference, stressed that such were aimed at strengthening Arab ties and to give people a chance to express their beliefs and views on what is happening in their region as well as what ought to be done.

"It is a people's conference. It is a forum where Arab thinkers, writers and intellectuals from all walks of life meet to discuss the ways in which they can better their respective societies and achieve unity among Arabs," Mr. Dahleh added.

The conference's final communiqué, a copy of which was sent to the Jordan

Times, warned against the threat of globalisation to pan-Arab security.

Globalisation, in all its political, economic and cultural dimensions, "will affect us negatively if we do not take responsibility of our own future, our development and our cultural identity," the final communiqué stated adding that Arabs need to concentrate and use globalisation to further their cause.

"The crucial juncture that the Arab-Israeli conflict is going through also represents a great danger to pan-Arab security reaffirming the need to deal with the conflict as one of existence rather than a border conflict," the communiqué added.

In view of current developments, participants urged the international community not to forget the Palestinian right to self-determination, their right in an independent state and an end to occupation.

The conference also called on Arab governments to hold an emergency Arab summit and to take necessary steps to put an end to the Judaisation of Arab Jerusalem.

Participants at the conference also stressed on the importance of democracy and the strengthening of civil society in Arab countries.

Human rights and socio-economic developments were also on the agenda, along with water issues, embargoes and the importance of strengthening inter-Arab relations.

Representatives of more than 20 Arab countries attended the conference including former Algerian President Ahmad Ben Bella, former Iraqi minister Adib Jaber and former Egyptian army general Tal'at Musalam.



REGENT VISITS ARMY UNIT: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday visits the Prince Hassan Armoured Brigade where he was received by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mirai and other senior officers. The Regent, who was accompanied by His Royal Highness Prince Rashid, watched the unit's military exercises and had lunch with the brigade's officers and soldiers. He also met with retired officers who worked in the unit prior to their retirement (Armed Forces photo)

Israeli-Palestinian lack of trust is behind crisis

By Robert Mahoney
Reuter

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — Against a backdrop of bombs and bulldozers Palestinians and Israelis are fast losing the carefully-nurtured trust that made Middle East peace possible.

The growing dialogue of the deaf between Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat is troubling Washington which has no diplomatic ace up its sleeve.

Western officials say they fear all-important security cooperation between the two sides is deteriorating. "If that happens the tinder is just waiting for a spark," said a Western envoy.

After last Friday's suicide bombing at a Tel Aviv cafe, Mr. Netanyahu stopped short of formally severing links with Mr. Arafat's self-rule Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

But political talks were all but dead anyway, officials on both sides admit privately.

"The most dangerous sign is not the peace negotiations but the possible collapse of communication between the security services," said one Western diplomat. "The fault lies on both sides."

Security officials have met since the bombing and Palestinian police tried to quell Palestinian stone-throwing in Hebron last weekend.

Yet the suspicion and lack of trust in the political arena have spilled over into security cooperation since Mr. Netanyahu sent bulldozers to a hill between Arab East Jerusalem and Bethlehem to begin a Jewish settlement.

Israel suspended joint patrols with the Palestinian police in the West Bank although they continue in the Gaza Strip. "Security coordination for urgent matters is still going on," Major General Abdul Razeq Al Majaydeh, head of security forces in Gaza, told Reuters.

The atmosphere has been strained, however, officials say.

Within four days of the Jerusalem groundbreaking the militant Hamas group broke a year-long lull in its suicide bombing campaign by killing three women in the cafe attack.

Mr. Netanyahu accused Mr. Arafat of giving the bombers a green light in an attempt to strengthen his hand at the bargaining table. He said peace talks would not move ahead unless Mr. Arafat curbed "terrorism."

On Monday, Ron Ben Yishai, a leading security commentator in the Yediot Achronot newspaper, quoted security officials as saying Arafat

wanted to topple Mr. Netanyahu's government by fomenting violence.

Palestinians reject all these charges. "Security coordination is linked to the development of the political peace process and they are not separate," Ahmad Abdul Rahman, secretary general of the PNA's cabinet, told Reuters.

He said the authority was not Israel's client militia.

Mr. Netanyahu wants a repeat of the

NEWS ANALYSIS

crackdown Mr. Arafat launched against Hamas and Islamic Jihad a year ago after a wave of suicide attacks that helped topple the Labour government of Shimon Peres.

But Mr. Arafat had more to gain from helping Mr. Peres than, then, he does now from heeding Mr. Netanyahu's calls, political analysts said. Mr. Netanyahu has offered to redeploy Israeli forces from nine per cent of West Bank rural areas in the first of three withdrawals due by the middle of next year. Mr. Arafat wants 30 per cent. The redeployment is already overdue.

The bulldozers, which Mr. Netanyahu sent in under pressure from the nationalist and settler components of his centre-right coalition, pushed Mr. Arafat further into a corner. Israel then accused him of using violence as a means of getting out.

The United States, which used its veto twice to shield Israel from condemnation at the United Nations over Jerusalem settlement, said it had no evidence that Arafat had given the nod to Hamas. To have accepted Israel's assertion would have shot Washington's credibility as a broker with the Palestinians.

U.S. officials acknowledge privately that for the moment they are empty-handed as far as Mr. Arafat is concerned. The Palestinian president ignored a U.S. suggestion he return home this week rather than embark on trips to Sri Lanka and Bangladesh after a meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference in Islamabad.

U.S. officials have not given up hope of salvaging the process they have shepherded for the past six years but they say they have little to work with.

"The lack of trust now is as bad as it was before September," said one official, referring to violence that killed more than 80 Palestinians and Israelis after Mr. Netanyahu opened a new entrance to a tunnel entrance near Muslim holy places in Jerusalem.

Israeli-Palestinian clashes continue

(Continued from page 1)

An Israeli army spokeswoman confirmed the clashes in Bethlehem and said the army was using tear-gas to quell them.

Many of the protests were organised by the Fateh movement, until now the strongest supporter of peace with Israel (see page 12).

Kamel Ihmeid, a Fateh leader in Bethlehem, said he expected violence to escalate unless Israel stopped the Jerusalem construction.

"In a week or two, if the Israelis don't stop building, we cannot control the situation," Mr.

Ihmeid said.

Ihmeid said Fateh leaders were also concerned about the growing popularity of Hamas and Islamic Jihad as Palestinians become increasingly frustrated with Mr. Netanyahu's tough policies.

"If we don't move now, Hamas will lead the street," said Mr. Ihmeid.

With both sides at a deadlock, the United States was expected to step in soon to try and revive the peace process.

An Israeli official confirmed Tuesday that a return of the U.S. Mideast coordinator, Dennis Ross, to the region was being dis-

cussed.

Mr. Ross helped negotiate the Hebron agreement that led to a pull-back of Israeli troops from most of the city.

Asked about a possible Netanyahu-Arafat summit, the Israeli leader's senior adviser said Tuesday the prime minister was ready to meet with Mr. Arafat, but only under certain conditions.

"The offer to meet with Mr. Arafat still stands," David Bar-Ilan told the Associated Press. "The first order of business is the question of combating terrorism."

Dispute over moderator scraps debate by JMA presidential candidates

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An unprecedented dispute between Islamist and Arab nationalist doctors forced the cancellation of what was promised to be a challenging debate organised by the Jordan Medical Association (JMA) among the four vying for the association's presidency.

The dispute erupted after Omar Abu Laban, an Arab nationalist doctor, questioned the "neutrality" of Zuhair Ababneh, who is running on an Islamist list for a seat in the JMA council, in moderating the debate.

Dr. Abu Laban called on Dr. Ababneh, who is on incumbent President Bassam Dajani's list, to step down and hand over the assignment to his deputy.

Dr. Abu Laban, a candidate on Mohammad Oran's leftist list for the 10-seat JMA council, asserted that Dr. Ababneh could not be objective and that he will favour Dr. Dajani when giving floor time.

"He will give Dr. Dajani an hour and a half and other presidential candidates 15 minutes," he said.

Dr. Ababneh rejected the call and the presidential candidates, including Dr. Oran, supported his position.

But a heated exchange followed, forcing Dr. Ababneh to cancel the scheduled debate which never took off.

According to Islamists, the meeting was organised and called for by the JMA media committee whose president should moderate the debate.

"We were invited by the media committee and it is the host of the meeting, therefore Dr. Ababneh has all the right to moderate the debate," Dr. Dajani told the

Jordan Times.

Islamists also questioned the challenges to the illegality of a candidate to moderate the debate.

"It is not a general assembly meeting where decisions are going to be taken; nor is it a meeting called for by the board of the JMA. It is a meeting organised by the media committee to give the presidential candidates a chance to present their programmes and plans for running the JMA," said Ishraq Marqaa, a former president of the JMA.

The Islamists have virtually controlled the association for the past six years. Dr. Marqaa was the first Islamist to win the presidency. He served for two terms.

Arab nationalist doctors maintained their challenge and asserted that any candidate will campaign for his/her list when moderating the debate.

Abdul Rahim Hadidi told the Jordan Times the insistence of Dr. Ababneh to perform as a moderator was a "scandal" and that such behaviour was "disrespectful" of the association's history.

"In similar circumstances the moderator should step down and hand the position to his deputy or any one the assembly agrees upon," said Dr. Hadidi.

Dr. Ababneh insisted on his right to moderate the debate, pointing out that none of the presidential candidates had asked him to step down.

He told the Jordan Times that there was nothing in the association's law that says, he "cannot run the debate."

Elections for the presidential seat and council will take place on April 4.

UAE reshuffles cabinet

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) named a Western-educated technocrat as oil minister, filling a post left vacant for almost four years, and seven other new faces to the government on Tuesday.

Obaid Ben Saif Al Nassiri, a senior executive at the state-run Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, entered the UAE government for the first time in the reshuffle.

The official news agency WAM said President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan approved the cabinet, led like the previous

government by Prime Minister Sheikh Maktoum Ben Rashid Al Maktoum who is also vice president.

Another new face was Sheikh Abdullah Ben Zayed Al Nahayan, 25, the Information Ministry under-secretary, who took over the ministry from Khalaf Al Rumi.

A former secretary general of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Sheikh Fahim Al Qassimi, was named economy and commerce minister in the first cabinet reshuffle since 1990.

Mother of Palestinian suicide bomber says son died 'worthy death'

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The mother of the Palestinian who blew himself up in a crowded Tel Aviv restaurant last week, killing three Israeli women, has said her son died a worthy death. The Haaretz newspaper reported Tuesday.

Zina, the mother of Musa Abdul Kader Abu Diya, said the only thing that pained her in the attack was the television scenes of a policewoman carrying away an injured six-month-old baby whose mother was slain in the blast.

"I stopped listening to the news soon after the attack," she told the daily. "Only the baby they showed on television hurt me."

She added that she thought her 28-year-old son had died a "worthy death."

On Friday, Abu Diya detonated three kilograms of explosives packed with nails on the cafe's crowded terrace, killing the baby's mother and two other women.

Zina said her son had slept at home in the West Bank village of Surif, near Hebron, the night before the attack and "didn't even take a jacket" when he left Friday morning.

He showed no signs of anger or tension while he ate breakfast with her, then told her as he was leaving the house that he was not

going as usual to his class on air condition mechanics but would remain in the area, Zina said.

Abu Diya was married with four children, financially secure and had worked in several restaurants around Tel Aviv before the bombing.

Israeli security officials have noted that his profile does not match that of most suicide bombers, who have usually been younger, unmarried and without children or any real purpose in life.

The mother was interviewed by Ha'aretz in secret at a village near Surif, which remained under a tight closure imposed by the Israeli army after the attack.

His family has appealed to Israel's supreme court against the demolition of their home, which was ordered by the Israeli army a day after the attack in the traditional Israeli reaction to suicide bombings. Such appeals have usually failed in the past.

Abu Diya's father, who worked for 12 years as a gardener for the Jerusalem municipality, and his two brothers have been in Israeli custody since Friday. His wife, Maisun, was also detained for questioning several hours after the attack.

Peace process is not unravelling, U.S. says

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The White House said on Monday the Middle East peace process was not unravelling and that all parties involved in the process were interested in establishing peace in the region.

Spokesman Michael McCurry also confirmed that King Hussein would meet U.S. President Bill Clinton in Washington on April 1.

The King had been scheduled to meet Mr. Clinton on March 18, but his visit was postponed after a Jordanian soldier shot dead seven Israeli girls near the Israel-Jordan border on March 13 and after Mr. Clinton had knee surgery on March 14.

In addition to the killing of the Israeli girls, a suicide bomber killed three Israeli women at a Tel Aviv cafe on Friday.

The bombing further injured an Israel-Palestinian relationship already strained over the construction Israel launched last week for a Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

In an effort to breathe new life into the peace process,

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak have all met Mr. Clinton in Washington over the past six weeks.

Asked if the peace process was now unravelling, White House Chief of Staff Michael McCurry replied: "No ... Manifestly the majority of Arabs and Jews want to see peace in that region. They have seen the benefits and the dividend of peace and they want leaders, and they want those who help the parties, to continue to make progress."

"They don't want to see the cycle descend to violence and terror, which are the weapons of those who are enemies of peace," he said.

On Sunday, Mr. Netanyahu sought to blame the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) for the recent incidents, suggesting it had given a "green light" for the resumption of violence.

Asked if the United States believed Mr. Arafat had

done enough to prevent this, Mr. McCurry avoided singling out the Palestinian leader but suggested the PNA could do more.

"The United States has said that everyone has to work even harder to prevent violence and terrorism," the spokesman said, adding that Mr. Clinton had raised the issue when he met Mr. Arafat in Washington on March 3.

"The president made it clear that ... all parties have to do everything they can to thwart terrorism," Mr. McCurry said, adding: "He talked specifically about those things that the Palestinian Authority can do to curb and thwart terrorism."

The spokesman's comments came amid reports that Washington was planning to send special Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross to the region to jumpstart the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

Reports in the Israeli press said Mr. Ross, who helped mediate the Israeli-Palestinian agreement on Israeli redeployment in Hebron, could be in the region this week.

De Charette sends message to Sharaa

DAMASCUS (R) — Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa held talks in Damascus on Tuesday with a French envoy on the obstacles facing the Arab-Israeli peace process, officials said.

They said that Jean Claude Cousseran, director of the Middle East Department at the French Foreign Ministry, also gave Mr. Sharaa a message from his French counterpart Herve de Charette.

They said that Mr. Cousseran, a former French ambassador to Syria, discussed with Mr. Sharaa issues related to bilateral cooperation.

Mr. Sharaa last week accused Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of putting the region on the verge of war by refusing to make peace with Damascus and building a settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

Syria strongly supports a French and a European role in the U.S.-sponsored Middle East peace process.

Syria has held sporadic peace talks with Israel since 1991 but the negotiations have been blocked over the fate of the Golan Heights, occupied by Israel in 1967 Middle East war.

China denies report of 'weapon-for-oil' agreement with Iraq

BEIJING (Agencies) — China on Tuesday denied press reports that British middlemen brokered an \$8 billion deal swapping Iraqi oil for Chinese weapons and aid in a breach of U.N. sanctions.

"The reports on the so-called accord between Chinese companies and Iraq have no foundation," Foreign Ministry spokesman Cui Tiankai told a media briefing.

China respects the United Nations resolutions which imposed an embargo on Iraq, he said, adding: "We have entered into no contracts with Iraq."

London's Sunday Times this week reported it had seen papers which proved Sinochem, the Chinese state-owned oil trading enterprise, had agreed to swap food and other humanitarian aid for \$3 billion of oil — equivalent to 100,000 barrels of oil a day for four years.

It linked the deal to another \$5 billion transaction, which involved China recouping the cost of weapons and other military

hardware supplied to Iraq, and perhaps further weapon exports.

Unnamed British middlemen who brokered the deal pulled out when weapons became involved, the Sunday Times said.

The paper also claimed the U.N. was investigating the affair.

The U.S., which leads the anti-Iraq camp in the West, has not commented on the report.

In September, Sinochem and Iraq's State Oil Marketing Organisation (SOMOA) signed an agreement which allows Sinochem to develop a southern oil field in Iraq.

The accord was signed after extensive talks held in Baghdad between a high-level Chinese government delegation, which met with several senior Iraqi officials.

Terms of that agreement have not been made public, but reports said the accord was contingent on an end to the sanctions imposed against Iraq following its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Saudi Arabia opens stock market to foreigners

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Saudi Arabia has opened its stock market to foreign investors in a move that will bring in more liquidity and increase share turnover in its already busy market, experts said Tuesday.

Saudi authorities have given the green light for the Saudi American Bank (SABAM) to set up the Gulf kingdom's first investment fund allowing foreign subscription. More banks are expected to follow suit.

"Most banks have presented applications for setting up similar funds. They are expected to get approval," said Henry Azzam, chief economist and deputy manager of the National Commercial Bank, the biggest bank in Saudi Arabia.

"You can say the SABAM move is a prelude for expanded foreign investment in the Saudi stock market," he added.

"There is no doubt this will reflect positively on the market by boosting turnover and share prices, bringing in more liquidity and enabling Saudi Arabia to attract the attention of international investors," Mr. Azzam told AFP from Jeddah.

Bankers said SABAM received approval on Monday from the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA), the kingdom's central bank, for setting up the Saudi

Arabian Investment Fund (SAIF Ltd.).

It will be listed on the London Stock Exchange and invest mainly in shares of Saudi firms.

It was the first time that the conservative Gulf nation, which controls more than a quarter of the world's oil wealth, has permitted foreigners to trade in its shares, which have largely been restricted to Saudis.

Bankers said most of Saudi Arabia's 12 commercial banks have applied to SAMA to set up such funds after they were officially notified the government intended to give limited access to foreign investors as part of reforms.

"The SABAM fund is just the beginning. More banks are expected to get approval for setting up similar facilities," said Anwar Ahmad, deputy chairman of the Riyadh-based Consultancy Centre for Financing and Investment, one of the main brokers in the bank-controlled Saudi stock market.

"Such moves have large benefits. They will bring Saudi Arabia into the fold of international investment activities and attract more money and professional investors," he added.

"As you know, huge sums of money are being invested in equities worldwide but that was not the case in Saudi Arabia because of its

previous laws barring foreigners from trading in its shares," Mr. Ahmad told AFP.

Mr. Azzam said opening up the market would also enable Saudi Arabia to gain "exposure to international investors seeking to diversify their portfolios."

"Saudi banks are allowed to set up investment funds. This means they already have the vehicle for attracting capital," he said.

Saudi Arabia is the fourth Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) state to give partial access to foreigners into its stock market.

Oman, Bahrain and Kuwait already allow limited expatriate share, while Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have said they plan such a move when they set up official stock exchanges.

Saudi Arabia does not have a formal trading floor. Share-dealing is conducted through the most sophisticated bank network in the Middle East and turnover is one of the highest.

The capitalisation in the nearly 80 banks and companies trading in the market stood at around \$45 billion at the end of 1996, nearly half the total Arab capitalisation.

Egypt eyes expatriates for investment

CAIRO (R) — Egypt is trying to attract funds from the millions of its citizens working abroad and set out to lure them Monday with an array of investment incentives and by tapping their nationalism.

Ministers pleaded with hundreds of Egyptians at the Cairo fifth annual conference for expatriate businessmen to set up shop in Egypt's rapidly expanding economy.

"Egyptians abroad have proved that they have the power to convince others to invest in Egypt. You are our ambassadors," Finance Minister Mohammed Al Gharib told the businessmen.

Officials estimate that about 3.6 million Egyptians work abroad. Their remittances are a vital source of foreign currency for Egypt and transfers in the 1995/96 financial year were estimated at more than 3.7 billion pounds (\$1.09 billion) down from 4.2 billion in the previous year.

"Undoubtedly Egyptians working abroad have a great role in the economy but now even more opportunities await them. They also have a nationalistic role to play, for after all this is their country," said Economy Minister Nawal Al Tattawi.

The conference pitched investment schemes in the new valley to the 300 businessmen working in 14 countries. The pet project of President Hosni Mubarak hopes to develop Egypt's south into a new community aimed at easing population density and pressure on the resources in the north.

Egypt's growth potential hit headlines last year after President Mubarak appointed a more reform-minded

cabinet whose main objective is to develop the economy.

The state has since stepped up its privatisation programme, developed its securities market, and targeted annual growth rates of about six per cent from the current five per cent. Its efforts have drawn millions of dollars of foreign and local investment as well as investment grade credit ratings by international agency Standard and Poors.

But although the government has whetted the appetite of international investors for Egypt, its businessmen said they had their

reservations about investing in their homeland.

"Why do I have to deposit 25 per cent of the capital of any project I want to set up in an Egyptian bank as guarantee?" said Adel Dahni, a doctor who works in the United States.

Others complained about the lack of mortgages from banks, shipping limitations, lack of infrastructure in areas outside the main cities and tedious bureaucratic procedures.

"No one doubts that investing in Egypt is a good option and the whole world is now investing in Egypt...but Egypt is now in

a transition period, the administrative structure is still falling into place," said Mahmoud Wahba, chairman of a U.S.-based organisation of Egyptian businessmen.

He also said the government was exaggerating the role of expatriate businessmen who due to their limited number will not have as great a role developing the economy as they did in the Asian "Tiger" economies.

"We shouldn't overestimate the capabilities of expatriate workers. Egyptians working abroad will not be the only ones to develop the economy," said Mr. Wahba.

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 25/03/97 19:14

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	SGD	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.6909	0.6167	1.4651	123.88	1.5777	1692.80	1.3001	5.6997
DE Mark	0.5915	1.0000	0.3633	0.8925	75.34	0.6484	736.37	0.5309	2.1836
GB Sterling	1.6163	2.7358	1.0000	2.3682	200.21	2.2268	2738.61	1.0740	9.2210
CHF Franc	0.6752	1.1134	0.2534	1.0000	136.35	0.7033	1336.21	0.5848	4.7557
JP Yen	0.0081	1.3843	0.4989	1.1825	1.0000	1.1114	13.86	153.40	4.5887
CA Dollar	0.6484	1.0938	0.3125	0.7033	75.34	1.0000	736.37	0.5309	2.1836
IT Lira	0.0006	0.0009	0.0003	0.0008	136.35	0.0007	1.0000	0.0005	0.0021
SG Dollar	0.7463	1.2500	0.3743	0.8696	75.34	0.6724	700.00	1.0000	4.1667
FR Franc	0.1754	0.2965	0.1084	0.2570	200.21	0.2416	33.35	33.3500	1.0000

Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	18.90	18.90
WTI	18.90	18.90
Bony	18.90	18.90
UL Gas	207.00	0.00

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4511	0.165	0.3911	33.0524
KW Dinar	3.2971	5.5772	2.0404	4.5359	408.564
CY Pound	1.973	3.3354	1.2191	2.8909	244.375

Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	348.95	349.45
Platinum (oz's)	373	374
Ag (oz's)	162	163
CU (3 Months)	2365	2368
Zinc (3 Months)	1222	1225
Lead (3 Months)	680	681
Ni (3 Months)	2750	2755

Period	-1	-3	-6	-9	-12
US\$	5.59	5.51	5.74	5.86	6.03
DEM	9.58	9.51	9.74	9.86	10.03
JPY	0.43	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.75
CHF	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30
FRF	3.21	3.25	3.34	3.41	3.49
ITL	7.51	7.53	7.52	7.25	7.26

Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pt Ch
New York	DOW JONES	6947.17	41.82	0.61	6947.33	6905.23
London	FT-SE 100	4270.4	55.6	1.32	4270.4	4240.5
Paris	CAC 40	2824.25	44.97	1.74	2824.25	2782.28
Frankfurt	DAX	3324.14	27.3	0.82	3324.14	3296.84

Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lbs)	172.75	Spot
Sugar (c/lbs)	1453	Spot
Soy (c/lbs)	309.9	Spot
Wheat (c/lbs)	108	Spot
Soy (c/lbs)	22.8	Spot
Tea (c/lbs)	125	Spot
Barley (c/lbs)	0	Spot
Rice (c/lbs)	500	Spot

Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
DE Mark	1.3446	1.3503
DE Mark	0.4192	0.4213
CHF Franc	0.6853	0.6877
FR Franc	0.1243	0.1249
JP Yen	0.5733	0.5762
NL Guilder	0.3729	0.3748
IT Lira	0.2188	0.221

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

Oman reports sharp drop in '96 deficit

MUSCAT (AFP) — A surge in oil prices coupled with government spending cuts sharply reduced the deficit in Oman's budget in 1996 and the shortfall is set to disappear in 2000, officials have said.

From around \$1.24 billion in 1995, the actual budget deficit was slashed to only \$126.1 million in 1996, according to a report by the ministry of development.

Expenditure was trimmed

med to \$5.34 billion from \$6.06 billion while oil earnings grew to \$3.98 billion from \$3.56 billion.

"The government intends to wipe out the budget deficit by the end of the 1996-2000 development plan," finance ministry undersecretary, Darwish Ismail, told AFP.

He said the state budgets are usually based on an oil price of \$15 and that any increase is transferred to the state reserve fund.

"This will enable the government to cover the deficit through withdrawal from the fund without affecting its main resources," he said.

Oman, which is not a member of the 11-nation Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, heavily relies on oil exports, providing more than 80 per cent of its total income. The Gulf country produces an average 850,000 barrels per day of crude in 1996

and the level is set to rise this year.

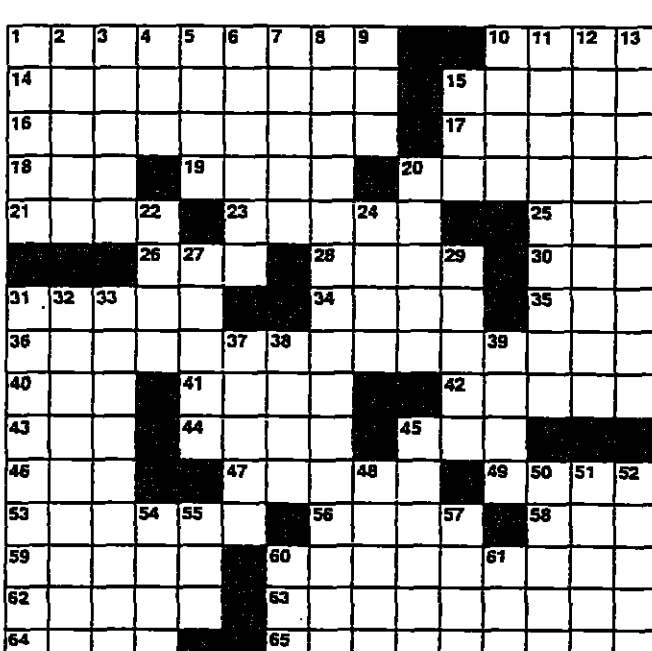
Crude prices surged by nearly \$3 in 1996, allowing most Gulf oil producers to cut the budget deficit and achieve high growth rates.

Oman projected a budget deficit of \$683.8 million in 1997 but officials said they expected it to be lower by the end of the year as oil prices will likely remain above \$15 assumed by the government.

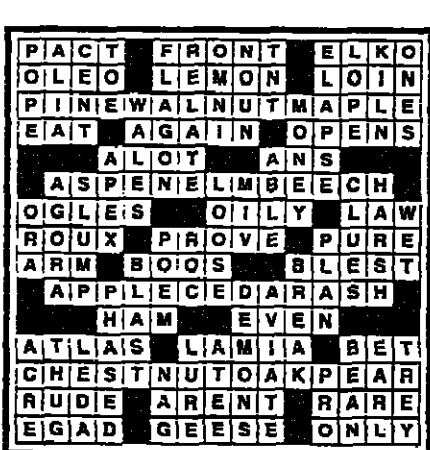
THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Truce
- 10 — Rabbit
- 14 Ballroom dance
- 15 — suzette
- 16 Sturdy fabric
- 17 Lucifer
- 18 Alfonso's queen
- 19 Depict
- 20 Roman philosopher
- 21 Stiff hair
- 23 Molars
- 25 Groove
- 26 Hawaiian garland
- 28 Fly high
- 30 Assam silkworm
- 31 Valuable thing
- 34 Writer Gardner
- 35 Modern pref.
- 36 Style of wrestling
- 40 "I — Camera"
- 41 Upright pref.
- 42 High school students
- 43 Leguminous plant of India
- 44 Red tag event
- 45 Author John — Passos
- 46 Before, to poets
- 47 Lawn bowling: var.
- 49 Robert or Alan
- 53 Imitators
- 56 New Zealand shrub
- 58 Broadcast
- 59 Italian general, Balbo
- 60 Home
- 62 Consumed
- 63 Weed out
- 64 Snicker —
- 65 Required



by Daniel J. Read



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- 7 Words by Caesar
- 8 Board game
- 9 Hearing organ
- 10 Machine gun
- 11 Awe
- 12 Pleasure-seeking
- 13 Kin
- 15 Alphabet run
- 20 Commandment word
- 22 Actor Baldwin
- 24 Reddish hartebeest
- 27 Moral character
- 29 Right-hand page
- 31 Military schools
- 32 Good — (helpful person)
- 33 Deadlock
- 37 Graceful horses
- 38 City in France
- 39 — jolly good...
- 45 Ridicule
- 48 Spanish houses
- 50 Hawaiian porch
- 51 Maxims
- 52 Spinning
- 54 Gen. Robert —
- 55 Actor Ely
- 57 Norse god
- 60 Female ruff
- 61 Outer pref.

Save water ... every drop counts!

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) If you use a bit of enthusiasm today, you easily convince some friends to go along with your ideas. Express yourself clearly and concisely in the explanation of your ideas to fellow associates who can be of assistance. **TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) Your career and public position are very important to you at this time, so make the best of every opportunity you are given and be on your toes in these areas. Protect your financial situation so you can have extra funds. **GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) If you need some advice today, consult only those people who have proven track records and thereby you can be successful. Try to bring any new ideas down to more workable levels which are more manageable.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You'll have an opportunity today to make a great advance in business, so keep eyes open. Be more helpful to your mate and he or she will appreciate all of the extra attention which you are providing. **LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) You should not allow a person with antiquated ideas to hold you back any longer. Use your creativity to your benefit. Be sure to get plenty of rest later this evening, so that you will be fresh and awake to handle any business ventures.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You can gain more of your daily activities today by using more modern methods of operation. Better cooperation can lead to increase productivity if you use the suggestions of knowledgeable persons who can be helpful.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is a good time today to plan some enjoyable recreational activities for the weekend. The days ahead can be very bright if you let superiors see your talents and thereby make your career activities successful.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Your home atmosphere can be much more harmonious if you and your mate entertain some relatives and friends today. Later this evening would be a good time to seek out the advice of knowledgeable people.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) The information you need to improve your efficiency is close at hand, so make every effort to acquire any assistance. If you have an opportunity to make some visits, do so and thereby you can please your loved ones.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Contact a wise financier of your loved ones today and get the advice you've been needing. Be clever where property is concerned later this evening and thereby you can make your home more valuable and enjoyable to guests.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You have many fine ideas which you want to put into operation today. This time is a good time to do so. Have more confidence in yourself so that others, especially bigwigs will notice your capabilities. **PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) You will have to be more open-minded today if you want to have a very interesting and profitable life. Be more romantic towards your mate and show that you appreciate him or her by going to a romantic location.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper.

UAE eyes Asian market for expanding aluminium industry

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has sharply boosted the production capacity of its aluminium plant and will set up a new smelter to take advantage of the growing Asian market, officials have said.

Japan and South Korea already import more than 80 per cent of the Dubai smelter and they are set to increase purchases following the expansion of the plant by nearly 130,000 tonnes per year, the officials said.

"The market in those two countries is steadily growing and we expect new markets in Asia given our competitive supplies," a UAE industry source said.

The expansion in the Dubai smelter in Dubai was prompted by the strong demand in Asia. There are plans to set up a new smelter in Abu Dhabi, which will also target those markets. This makes it a highly feasible project," the source pointed out.

Dubai, the second biggest and wealthiest member of the UAE, has invested nearly \$500 million to boost its smelter's output capacity to around 372,000 tonnes per year from 240,000 tonnes per year.

The company said it would officially inaugurate the project, which was completed in January and involved the installation of a fifth production line.

Growing number of Americans employed by foreign companies

WASHINGTON (AP) — Underscoring the increasing influence of the global economy on the United States, the number of Americans working for foreign companies has more than doubled since 1980 to nearly five million, a study has said.

The Organisation for International Investment, a Washington trade association for foreign companies with U.S. operations, found the largest concentration of these jobs in California, New York and Texas — one-fourth of the total.

The number of Americans working for the subsidiaries of foreign firms increased from 2.03 million in 1980 to 4.87 million in 1994, the latest year for which statistics are available, the trade association said.

This represented a 140 per cent increase compared with a gain in total U.S. jobs during this period of 24 per cent.

The report said workers at the foreign-owned companies received wages that on average were 26 per cent higher than wages paid to workers at other U.S. businesses.

"International investment means good paying jobs for American workers," said Richard Goldstein, chief executive officer of Unilever United States and head of the trade group.

"The facts are clear: More American workers are being paid higher wages because their jobs are with U.S. subsidiaries of foreign parent companies," he said.

Unilever is the U.S. subsidiary of a Dutch-British company that in the United States makes such food products as Lipton tea and Breyers ice cream.

In 1980, the 2.03 million Americans working for foreign-owned companies represented two per cent of the total civilian workforce while the 4.87 million total for 1994 represented four per cent of the total workforce.

Allegations of improper foreign fund raising by the Democratic National Committee (DNC) in last year's campaigns have led to investigations by the Justice Department and congressional committees.

Seeking to stem the

uproar, the Democratic National Committee announced last month that it would no longer accept campaign contributions from U.S. subsidiaries of foreign companies, even though these donations are legal under U.S. law.

Todd Malan, executive director of the Organisation for International Investment, said the report has been in the works for several months and was not a direct response to the DNC action. But he said the report did underscore the impact these companies have.

"We want to get out the message of the contribution our companies are making to the U.S. economy," Mr. Malan said.

"This is all about the global economy and this part of it needs to be understood better."

The report said that nearly half of the total foreign employment in 1994 was at manufacturing firms. This represented 2.03 million of the 4.87 million total.

Manufacturing employment at foreign-owned subsidiaries represented 11 per cent of all manufacturing jobs in 1994, up from eight per cent in 1988.

During this six year period, the total number of workers employed in manufacturing in the United States dropped by five per cent while those employed by foreign companies was increasing by 32 per cent, the report said.

Starting in the 1980s, Japanese and German automakers began building more manufacturing plants in the United States as the foreign share of the U.S. auto market increased.

Companies involved in retail trade represented the next biggest category of jobs at \$49,000 followed by service companies in general with 669,000 in 1994.

The report ranked the 10 states with the largest number of employees of foreign-owned subsidiaries in 1994 as California, 522,400; New York, 356,000; Texas, 320,000; Pennsylvania, 233,100; Illinois, 229,000; North Carolina, 221,800; New Jersey, 211,200; Ohio, 209,400; Florida, 198,200 and Georgia, 173,700.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Mulki stresses role rather than new form or name for Ministry of Supply

**REGARDLESS OF the form or name that the Ministry of Supply will take in the future, the role of the new institution will be concentrated on three main directions, Industry, Trade and Supply Minister Hani Mulki told Al Ra'i Arabic daily. "The form or name of the Ministry of Supply in the future will not be important in as much as the role and the service that it will render," he stressed.

The minister specified the three main directions to be: control over foodstuffs, providing strategic stocks and checking on prices through intervention in the market to prevent monopolies.

Dr. Mulki revealed that the ministry has started to formulate a clear strategy that will specify its future and its structure but the minister did not indicate when this strategy will be announced. He hinted that the strategy will be discussed further by the Cabinet noting that there is ample time to come out with a new structure that will be more accurate and objective.

The minister confirmed a previous plan to choose one of two alternatives. The first is to merge the Ministry of Supply with the Ministry of Industry and Trade by having both under the responsibility of one minister with one secretary-general managing the industry and trade and another managing the supply affairs. The second alternative is to transform the Ministry of Supply into a general institution for grain.

By giving Dr. Mulki the portfolio of industry, trade and supply, observers are inclined to prefer the first option of merging the industry and trade with the supply. This set up will be followed by restructuring and then specifying the form or the name of the new institution. Informed sources indicate that the government will be taking measures for the merger option as it has backed away from the idea of cancelling the ministry (Al Ra'i).

Medicine exports reach JD100m

**INDUSTRIAL EXPORTS have accounted for 90 per cent of Jordan's total exports during the past four years as they amounted to over JD900 million annually, the Amman Chamber of Industry (ACI) President Khalid Abu Hassan said in an interview. A third of the industrial exports was mining and fertiliser exports whereas the rest were exports of convertible industries such as medicines, cleaning products, cement, textiles, clothes, paper and cardboard, plastics and paints, he pointed out.

The ACI president highlighted the drugs industry to be in the forefront of the convertible industries and indicated that exports of medicines have reached nearly JD100 million last year. He said that Jordanian medicines are being exported to 15 Arab countries, five countries in eastern Europe and another five in western Europe in addition to the United States and other African and Asian states (Al Aswaq).

THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen



"I exercised once. You didn't like the way it made me smell, so I quit."

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Arginton

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

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My daily pick-me-up

WHAT THE BEER MAKER DRANK IN THE MORNING.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here:

Yesterday's Jumbles: CHESS AXIOM INLAID PASTRY

Answer: The result of burying cash in the garden — "RICH" SOIL.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET										
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHARAFIYAH										
TELEPHONE: 607171 - 107179										
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 25/03/1997										
PART	22 MONTHLY	COMPANY'S NAME	P/E	DIV.	NO. OF	NO. OF	VALUE	OPEN	LAST	CHANGE
HIGH	LOW				TRANS	SHARES	TRADED JD	PRICE	PRICE	
269.000	205.000	ARAB BANK	13.9	1.38	80	30320	254.25	244.00	0.25	
N	2.10	JOR. NATIONAL B.	E	0.00	7760	14764	1.80	1.89	0.01	
	3.800	BANK OF JORD.	20.1	0.00	4	9000	25200	2.80	2.80	-
	1.210	MID.EAST. B.	0.77	0.00	7	450	462	1.02	1.03	0.01
	2.610	INDUSTRIAL B.	17.8	6.03	750	1731	2.27	2.31	0.04	
	5.150	JOR. MORTG. B.	13.1	2.83	61	66435	32927	4.89	4.88	0.01
	2.950	JOR. HUNTRY B.	19.7	0.00	4	350	953	2.72	2.72	-
	1.090	JOR. GULF B.	5.0	8.33	6000	5040	0.84	0.84	0.00	
	2.800	UNION B. SAV. INV.	P	0.00	800	1165	1.45	1.50	0.05	
	3.800	JOR. INV. FIN. BANK	17.3	0.00	4	390	1246	3.20	3.20	-
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 193.60 CHNG: -0.08 97 91982 396903										
2.730	1.830	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.4	10.42	1	2750	5280	1.92	1.92	-
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 119.24 CHNG: 0.00 1 2750 5280										
1.830	1.450	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	11.4	7.32	5	2537	4159	1.63	1.64	0.01
2.700	2.400	SINER MINERALS	13.0	5.28	2	8281	21892	2.65	2.65	-
7.110	6.000	VEHIC. OWNERS FED.	8.2	4.67	1	100	750	7.31	7.50	0.19
1.540	1.060	NATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	10	2750	2970	1.08	1.08	0.00
1.090	0.820	REAL ESTATE INV.	21.8	3.80	1	1000	980	0.99	0.98	0.01
0.950	0.400	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	28.2	0.00	1	200	110	0.58	0.55	0.03
0.800	0.410	HACH. EXP. SERV. HAIN.	9	0.00	5	1100	645	0.56	0.59	0.03
1.230	0.960	SAUD. EDUCATION	6	0.00	2	550	550	1.00	1.00	0.00
2.230	1.650	UNIFIED CO.	8.3	6.29	22	7450	13038	1.74	1.75	0.01
S. & SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 104.84 CHNG: +0.09 50 23748 45093										
3.730	3.060	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	20.4	2.80	9	10092	36028	3.56	3.57	0.01
3.500	2.710	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	35.0	0.00	1	300	7023	3.10	2.95	0.06
6.100	4.950	ARAB POTASH CO.	18.2	3.33	3	300	1808	6.03	6.00	0.03
1.590	1.180	WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	55.8	0.00	3	1000	1350	1.39	1.35	0.04
3.300	2.650	INDUSTRIAL CONC. AGR.	3.7	0.00	1	1000	246	2.46	2.43	0.03
7.950	6.420	JOR. MORTG. B.	13.1	3.67	2	2950	20119	6.85	6.82	0.03
4.100	3.040	ARAB PHARM. IND.	21.3	5.42	7	2145	7924	1.07	1.06	0.01
1.820	1.210	NAT'L. INDUSTRIES	9	0.00	14	21150	12247	1.58	1.57	0.01
6.600	4.250	DAR ALDINA DV. INV.	13.1	4.18	7	2650	12706	4.80	4.78	0.02
5.440	3.130	ARAB ALUM. IND.	8.3	8.93	5	900	3022	3.32	3.36	0.04
0.960	0.450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9	0.00	14	21150	12247	1.58	1.58	0.00
1.400	1.050	ARAB PAPER CORP. TRD.	7.4	9.50	7	2050	2235	1.09	1.09	0.00
1.020	0.540	NATIONAL IND.	9.3	9.52	2	1250	788	0.63	0.63	-
0.540	0.270	ARMED. SERV. CHEM.	9	0.00	1	750	668	0.68	0.69	0.01
1.150	0.500	JOR. ROCKWOL IND.	9	0.00	2	350	259	0.75	0.74	0.01
3.730	2.130	NATL. CABLE WIRE MFAC	15.0	0.00	2	650	1606	2.50	2.47	0.03
1.370	0.870	JOR. SUBSID. CORP.	9	0.00	12	5700	3698	0.91	0.94	0.03
2.870	1.050	ARAB PHARM. CO.	27.0	0.00	11	3350	4876	1.45	1.44	0.01
2.740	1.440	UNIV. MOON IND.	5.0	12.20	5	650	1067	1.64	1.64	-
1.820	1.140	JOR. IND. RESOURCES	17.2	0.00	39	25750	36705	1.36	1.37	0.01
1.270	0.850	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	25.0	0.00	16	11400	10488	0.92	0.92	0.00
2.400	1.750	EL-SAY READY WEAR	7	0.00	1	800	905	1.82	1.81	0.01
1.360	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	27.8	0.00	5	1250	1465	1.16	1.18	0.02
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 117.55 CHNG: -0.38 161 98537 167744										
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 152.98 CHNG: -0.19 310 21721 615026										
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 25/03/1997										
0.690	0.430	CENTRAL GEN. TR. BRACE	11.4	0.00	7	6750	1047	0.46	0.47	0.01
N	0.790	JOR. TRADE FAC.	11.1	0.00	7	27050	2840	0.48	0.49	0.01
	0.950	JOR. FIN. INV. CO. 75	2	0.00	2	26007	1404	0.77	0.77	0.01
	0.850	UNION INV. 50	66.0	0.00	5	31000	5890	0.69	0.69	-
	0.860	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9	0.00	8	8800	3784	0.42	0.43	0.01
N	0.950	AL-SHARAH INV. 75	2	0.00	2	62500	35396	0.78	0.82	0.04
	0.950	AL-BANAYAT INV. 75	14.9	0.00	1	500	205	0.65	0.66	0.01
	1.690	NATL. CHLORENE	5	0.00	7	3200	4512	1.40	1.41	0.01
	0.690	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	9	0.00	5	5000	2250	0.45	0.45	0.01
	0.740	NATL. TEXTILE	9	0.00	3	650	325	0.51	0.50	0.01
	0.850	NATL. MOLT. ENG. SAMICO	9	0.00	68	126950	57956	0.45	0.46	0.01
	0.660	HANZAN BLES & HOUSES	9	0.00	1	2500	1400	0.78	0.82	0.04
	0.990	JORDAN STEEL	8	0.00	6	3950	2923	0.73	0.74	0.01
	1.330	UNION TOBACCO 75	8	0.00	1	9500	173	0.92	0.94	0.02
	0.770	RAZI PHARM. 65	9	0.00	9	5950	1389	0.37	0.38	0.01
	0.660	TINDS. ENG.	27.1	0.00	1	250	110	0.43	0.44	0.01
	1.070	INDS. CERAMIC	8	0.00	2	350	280	0.76	0.80	0.04
	0.820	NATL. POLYTRY	8	0.00	3	1650	1122	0.69	0.68	0.01
N	1.020	ARAB INT. FOOD FACT.	59.7	0.00	1	2000	1700	0.85	0.85	0.00
	0.870	MID.EAST. COMPLEX	9.0	0.00	34	61000	47678	0.78	0.77	0.01
GRAND TOTAL 216 366747 162298										

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Jordan plays Tajikistan in Davis Cup opener today

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

THE KINGDOM'S tennis team plays Tajikistan in the opening match of their Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Zone Group 4 qualifiers which start in Oman Wednesday.

The March 26-30 qualifiers group Syria, Tajikistan, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Brunei and Jordan with only the top two teams of the six-team group promoted to Group 3.

The Kingdom's team left for Muscat Monday with team captain Talal Maher expressing hope that the team would be able to score better results and be promoted to Group 3.

Jordan had been relegated to Group 4 in 1995 and failed to be promoted last year after playing in groups 2 and 3 previously.

Countries participating in the annual team tournament are classified into five groups with the world's top teams playing in the prestigious World Group. The other countries are divided into four regional groups.

Representing Jordan are Tharwat Qaisi, Ahmad Hadid and Ghassan Qadi. Faris Azzouni was included in the team after the Jordan Tennis Federation (JTF) recently lifted a one year suspension. Azzouni beat younger brother Leith and Khaled Nafa'a in playoffs to qualify for the competition.

Mr. Maher said the team had been training since December under the supervision of head coach Kathem Hussein, formerly Iraq's top ranked player.

"I think we have a better chance this year. We concentrated on physical fitness, which had been a weak point in previous years," he told the Jordan Times prior to departure.

The Davis Cup competition is played on a round-robin format with two singles and one doubles match for each team daily.

The Davis Cup Groups 4 schedule is as follows:

Wed. 26/3	Jordan vs. Tajikistan Oman vs. Brunei Syria vs. UAE
Thurs. 27/3	Syria vs. Tajikistan UAE vs. Brunei Oman vs. Jordan
Fri. 28/3	Tajikistan vs. Oman Syria vs. Brunei UAE vs. Jordan
Sat. 29/3	Tajikistan vs. UAE Oman vs. Syria Brunei vs. Jordan
Sun 30/3	Tajikistan vs. Brunei Oman vs. UAE Jordan vs. Syria



Arsenal's Dennis Berkamp (R) fights for the ball with Liverpool's Jason McAteer during their crucial F.A. Carling Premiership match at Arsenal (Reuters photo)

L.A. Lakers crush Nets 109-84

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey (R) — Nick Van Exel scored 23 points as the Los Angeles Lakers crushed New Jersey 109-84 Monday, leaving Nets coach John Calipari questioning his team's heart.

"I thought this was a game we could get, but we shoot 33 per cent," Calipari said. "I'm very disappointed with the way we played at the end of the game. We didn't play with any heart. This was a soul-searching game."

Travis Knight hit his first five shots and tied a career high with 18 points. Van Exel made 9-of-19 shots and had 21 points through three quarters as the Lakers broke open a tight game with a 13-3 run early in the third.

Knight, who had seven rebounds in the third period, finished with 14, one shy of a career best.

"Travis played great," Los Angeles coach Del Harris said. "For a rookie, he has gotten some exciting numbers. Nick played well also. He has the green light to run until he doesn't have it."

Eddie Jones, who left briefly near the end of the third quarter with a sprained ankle, added 16 points for the Lakers. Los Angeles shot 58 per cent in the second quarter to help erase a five-point deficit. Jones and knight had six apiece in the period.

The win snapped a two-game slide and wrapped up a five-game road trip at 3-2 for the Lakers, who shot 41-for-86 (.477) from the field.

"I did need this type of game, but the team needed the victory more," Knight said. "We had to end this road trip on a solid note and I think that this victory does that."

Rookie Kerry Kittles had 17 points for the Nets, who are just 12-21 at home this season. New Jersey has lost six straight to Los Angeles.

New Jersey, which trailed 54-51 at the half, fell to 1-16 when behind at the break at home.

New Jersey shot just 33 percent from the field (34-of-102) and was 2-of-16 from three-point range. Kendall Gill, the NBA's 10th-leading scorer, left late in the third quarter with a laceration over his right eye and did not return for the Nets.

Christie to compete in Qatar

DOHA (R) — Former Olympic champion Linford Christie will compete in Qatar next month, the organisers said Tuesday.

Christie, 100 metres gold medalist at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, features among an array of top athletes down to race at the first-ever Qatar international meeting at Doha's 50,000-capacity Khalifa Stadium on April 24.

Namibian sprinter Frankie Fredericks, American former 400 metres world record-holder Butch Reynolds, Zambian 400 hurdler Samuel Matete and leading Kenyans William Tanui, Paul Bitok and Joseph Keter are also scheduled to compete.

Christie's British compatriots in the line-up include John Regis (200 metres), Roger Black, Jamie Baulch (both 400 metres), Colin Jackson and Tony Jarrett (both 110 metre hurdles).

Fowler hailed for penalty honesty

LONDON (AFP) — Liverpool striker Robbie Fowler was hailed as a role model for a remarkable display of sportsmanship during Monday's controversial 2-1 win at Highbury which effectively ended Arsenal's title challenge.

Fowler tumbled over a challenge from Arsenal's keeper David Seaman but immediately bounced to his feet, frantically signalling that the England goalkeeper had made no contact on him.

But his protests fell on deaf ears as referee Gerald Ashby pointed to the spot. Fowler himself took the kick, firing weakly to the left of Seaman who saved the effort only to see Jason McAteer score from the rebound.

The goal put Liverpool into a 2-0 lead, which was soon to be reduced by an Ian Wright goal, but they hung on for a win that lifted them to within three points of leaders Manchester United.

Defeat left Arsenal in third place, six points behind the leaders but having played a game more with just six left to play.

"Our lads are still sick at the penalty decision but they all appreciate what Robbie tried to do," said Seaman.

"It just shows what a great man he is and I only wish the referee had also been big enough to admit a mistake." Gunners boss Arsene Wenger also hailed Fowler's magnanimity but risked punishment from the Football

Association over his remarks about referee Ashby.

The Frenchman said: "It is a great gesture by Fowler and I would like to give him an award of fair play. But if he got that I would also have to give the referee an award for stupidity."

Fowler was jeered by the disappointed Arsenal fans for the rest of his time on the pitch, but the Highbury crowd had clearly not seen the 21-year-old Liverpool star's efforts to persuade the referee of his injustice.

Professional Footballers' Association chief executive Gordon Taylor said: "He deserves congratulations. I'd like any youngster coming into the game to use him as a role model for what he did."

"People should be praising him because not only was he clearly admitting he didn't deserve a penalty but also showing his concern that David Seaman, a fellow professional, might be sent off."

Fowler last week upset UEFA by unveiling a "political" T-shirt slogan in support of sacked Merseyside Dockers during Liverpool's Cup-Winners Cup clash with SK Brann of Norway at Anfield.

UEFA are considering whether official action against him is appropriate on that issue.

Taylor added: "His sportsmanship at Highbury was great news for the game. But football is still a sport as well as a big business and it was very

refreshing to see a player, especially one so young, making that sort of gesture."

"There is still much more sportsmanship among the players than a lot of people realise. You can see it plainly now, for instance, when kicking the ball out of play so that an injured opponent can receive treatment is commonplace."

Fowler was later congratulated by FIFA General Secretary Sepp Blatter.

Blatter faxed a message to the Liverpool echo newspaper for Fowler, saying: "I wish to congratulate you for the act of sportsmanship which you demonstrated in the match between Liverpool and Arsenal."

"Your reaction in the penalty incident, in which you visibly tried to persuade the referee from awarding a penalty in your favour, did you great honour. It is the kind of gesture which helps maintain the integrity of the game."

"At a time when there is a disturbing trend towards cheating, and when FIFA is appealing to players (especially in the professional game) to help referees rather than deceive them, your example at this vital moment in such an important match should set an example to younger players and fellow professionals alike."

"Thank you for helping FIFA in its efforts for the good of the game."

Thailand urged to end foot-dragging on Asian Games

BANGKOK (AFP) — Thailand has been urged to speed up preparations for the 1998 Asian Games or risk serious damage to its reputation and loss of any opportunity to host future events, the Bangkok Post reported on the weekend.

Thailand, which narrowly escaped losing the games on at least two occasions over the past two years, promised the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) it would take the necessary steps immediately, local media reported.

Crucial problems included the need for more information updates to the OCA and participating countries, more staff on the organising committee and action on publicity and sponsorships.

"I am surprised why Thailand is taking the Asian Games, or isn't placing strong enough emphasis, when it is well-known that the celebration will draw tremendous attention to the country and boost its chances of hosting bigger events," OCA Director-General Muttaieb Ahmad told the Post.

Muttaieb had also asked Thailand to pledge political stability and even a possible change of government would not affect the Asian games, the Nation daily reported.

Muttaieb made the suggestions in a meeting Friday with Sukavich Rangsitphol, director of the Bangkok Asian Games Organizing Committee (BAGOC).

"I pointed out that procrastination and delays would hurt the games and he agreed," Muttaieb told the Post in an interview.

"Then I pointed out it was of paramount importance not to sit on spon-

sorship contracts as it would hurt marketing the celebration and it may distract others from supporting the games."

On arrival in Bangkok this week, Muttaieb, who expects 9,000 to 10,500 athletes and officials to attend, said the OCA had received "nothing but groans and complaints" from member countries about Thailand's organisation.

Communication problems were a major gripe, he said.

"They don't want to be faced with language problems when making telephone calls from their cities. They don't want someone who doesn't know English to hang up the phone at the other end," he remarked.

Muttaieb apparently made no mention of the infrastructure problems which earlier plagued the organisation.

OCA officials had complained of lack of progress on housing for athletes and road and rail facilities to shuttle them to the various venues on the outskirts of the sprawling, congested Thai capital.

Meanwhile, Sukhavich, who is also education minister, said organisational problems would be given a high priority. He also said BAGOC, which has no actual powers, would be given legal status Tuesday.

Greek basketball giants clash with 7,000 police ready for duty

ATHENS (R) — Holders Panathinaikos and twice European finalists Olympiakos cross swords in a Greek classic this week to decide who wins the ticket for the final four basketball championship in Rome next month.

The history of such action-packed thrillers guarantees a basketball fervour unmatched anywhere else in Europe.

For millions of Greek fans "the true European kings" will emerge after the quarter-finals in Athens and not the championship in Rome.

"If we win the crown in Rome so much the better. But nothing beats the satisfaction of crushing Panathinaikos," said Panos Tertzis, a 17-year-old Olympiakos fanatic, adding confidently: "They will be wrecks for a year until we meet again."

The clubs need two victories to advance in the last four with Panathinaikos having the home advantage if it comes down to a third leg decider on April 3.

The matches are the talk of the town with heated arguments in cafes, schools, public offices and even bank dealing rooms. Tickets go for as much as \$300 each on the black market with sell-outs at both venues a certainty.

Police plan a massive operation with 7,000 officers on duty to prevent clashes at the 20,000 capacity Olympic stadium arena of Panathinaikos and the 16,000-seat Peace and Friendship Stadium of Olympiakos.

"The clubs can take advantage of FIBA regulations which say the home team manages the ticket sales and can give none to fans of the other team. But even if this happens there can be clashes outside the stadium," a police official said.

"These are the matches of the year and there is going to be a lot of security out there. There will be body searches for coins, lighters and flares that may be hurled to the pit. Riot units will be inside the stadium and anyone going wild will be immediately arrested," he added.

Panathinaikos coach Bozidar Maljkovic, who led the club to their first European Championship last season, believes the first match at the Olympic stadium could well decide the winner.

"The first match is the most crucial because it sets the psychology and largely determines who will pass," he said. "We must first control our anxiety and then focus to improve on the play details that will determine the winner."

The European crown captured last year was a moment of glory for Panathinaikos President Pavlos Yannakopoulos, who has spent \$50 million in the past five years to assemble a team of stars, but saw his club lose to Olympiakos in the final four of 1994 and 1995.

Yannakopoulos bought eight new players from Europe at the start of the season, including German guard Michael Koch, Spanish forward Feran Martinez, Italian power forward Hugo Sconokini and John Amaechi the best British pivot with many years in the NBA.

They had an impressive record in this year's first expanded Euroleague tournament finishing first in their group and advancing to the quarters with a home advantage. But they have had a poor season in the Greek championship, finishing only third in the regular season.

Olympiakos, Greek champions for the past

three years, dominated again in the championship finishing first, but their performance in Europe was inconsistent with several surprise defeats at home.

"We play better when the pressure is on," Olympiakos pivot Panayotis Fasoulas said. "We proved it when we were against the wall in the playoffs and managed to beat Partizan twice in Belgrade."

"Both Olympiakos and Panathinaikos play better away from home. The chances for each team are 50/50," he added.

Olympiakos are now at full strength after a long period of injuries and field mostly the same players who kicked off the club's meteoric rise four years ago.

They include guard George Sigalas, probably Europe's best defender, American playmaker and top scorer David Rivers, Chicago Bulls hopeful Dragan Tarlac from Yugoslavia and Fasoulas, the best Greek blocker.

The Fasoulas-Tarlac towering duo give Olympiakos a clear height advantage under the boards but Panathinaikos has better shooters outside the such as Koch and American playmaker Byron Dinkins.

The duel also features star Yugoslav coaches Dusan Ivkovic of Olympiakos, who has led Yugoslavia to win the world and European Championships, and Maljkovic, winner of four European championships with Yugoplastika, Limoges and Panathinaikos.

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Al Jardal Walkankah

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Qatar Horse Festival continues with horse jumping competition

By Lutfi Zu'bi in Doha and Aileen Bannayan in Amman

TWELVE countries Thursday start the horse jumping competition in the final event of the 6th Qatar International Horse Festival.

Hani Bisharat is Jordan's only representative alongside participants from Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, Palestine, Libya, Algeria, Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, the United Arab Emirates and Oman.

Meanwhile, the general assembly of the Arab Equestrian Federation resumes its meetings Wednesday.

On its agenda will be means of enhancing cooperation between Arab federations and bolstering the Arab Equestrian Federation activities in Asian and international arena.

Jordan's delegation to the meeting includes Abdullah Keswani, Ahmad Abul Ragheb and Fayyad Assaf.

The Jordanian delegation presented a paper dealing with ways to broaden the sport and encourage youth to take an active part in it.

President of the Royal Jordanian Equestrian Federation HRH Princess Alia left Doha Monday evening after attending the endurance race and horse shows of the festival.

Hosts Qatar dominated the horse show and endurance race competitions offering total prize money of \$200,000.

Twelve Jordanian horses took part in the endurance race. The only participant to finish the 42-kilometre race was Salameh Al Saoud who came in twentieth.

Eighteen Jordanian horses entered the various events of the festival which includes the endurance race, the horse jumping competition and the horse show.

During this week, Jordan's equestrian team also actively took part in Al Basel International Equestrian Championship which concluded in Damascus Monday.

Jordan's Ibrahim Bisharat proved he was a promising new face in the sport while veteran Hani Bisharat could only finish sixth in the Grand Prix of the championship which brought together 45 participants from Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Kuwait and Syria.

Six competitors represented Jordan in the four-day event celebrating the National Day of Syria.

Egypt's 16-member team was the largest delegation and dominated the major events of the competition.

Adham Hamad, who will also be taking part in the horse jumping competition in Qatar, took first place in the Grand Prix. Egyptians also took the top five places in the competitions leaving only third place to Lebanon's Yusef Mikhshen.

Ripken's record streak in jeopardy

FORT LAUDERDALE, Florida (AFP) — Cal Ripken's global record for consecutive baseball games, which helped revive the sport after a players' strike, is at risk because his team's owner no longer sees it as a priority.

"The streak, as far as I am concerned, has ended," Baltimore Orioles' owner Peter Angelos said. "The goals are met. I don't think it's important. The streak serves no purpose."

Ripken, 36, enters the final year of a five-year contract worth \$30 million having been shifted this season from shortstop to third baseman, a position he last played in 1982.

"I will miss shortstop, no doubt," Ripken said. "I look forward to the newness of the position. I will reach a comfort level. But it is going to take a little while. It's a new beginning. Maybe it will extend my career."

The fear is the move will end it. Angelos has given manager Davey Johnson tacit approval to bench the man whose 2,316 games in a row and humble nature made him greater than the game.

"A manager has an obligation to rest a player when he isn't functioning at top level," Angelos said. "To do otherwise jeopardises the chances of winning."

Some things are more important than winning. Ripken broke Lou Gehrig's U.S. record of 2,130 consecutive games in 1995 and last year surpassed the global streak set by Japan's Sachio Kinugasa, overshadowing the final game result.

If Ripken does not sign a new deal before next week's opener, he has vowed to become a free agent. Last year, Ripken hit .278 with 26 home runs and knocked home 102 runs.

The Orioles could lose a man who has played every game for them since May 30, 1982, and often stayed after to sign autographs until his hands cramped.

No shortstop has hit more homers or multiple-base hits in his career. Not even Mike Bordick, who takes Ripken's spot under a three-year pact worth nine million dollars.

"The move seemed inevitable," Bordick said. "It was going to happen." Most fans agree with Todd Zeile, the ex-Oriole third baseman released and now playing for the Los Angeles Dodgers.

"I don't understand the logic of moving Cal, arguably the best shortstop that has ever played," Zeile said.

Sanchez Vicario crashes out

KEY BISCAYNE, Florida (AFP) — Spain's Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario made a stunning fourth-round exit from the WTA Lipton Championships here Monday, showing how far she has fallen from her 1995 World No. 1 form.

France's Sandrine Testud, ranked 29th, beat third-ranked Sanchez 6-0, 7-5, to become the only unseeded quarter-finalist at the \$1.75 million event.

"It's a slow process," Sanchez said.

"It's a long way back to catch 100 per cent. I'm lucky to try and get it back. At least I've been there. Better to quit than to stop."

But it's not an obsession. "Hopefully when the clay courts come, I will get more work done and I will be ready for the French Open. That's what I'm working for."

Sanchez, 7-6 this year, has a new coach in brother Emilio and a new boyfriend, but insists life changes are not the problem and she is not looking to retire as Gabriela Sabatini and Kimiko Date did last year.

"I'm not thinking to get married," Sanchez insisted. Sanchez struggled earlier in the tournament to get past Japan's Naoko Kijimuta 4-6, 6-3, 6-2, and Slovakia's Henrieta Nagyova 7-5, 4-6, 6-4.

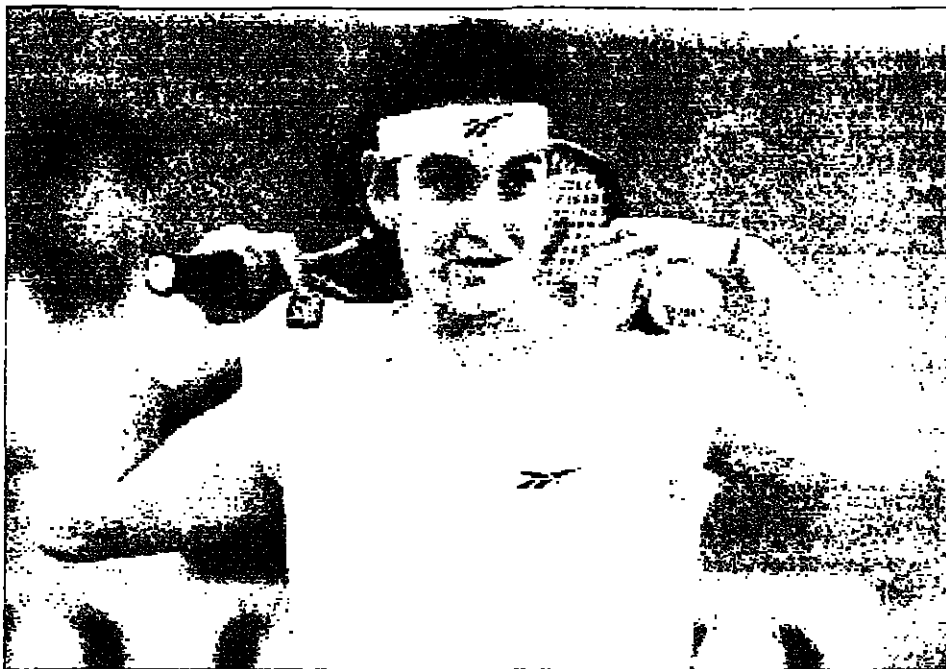
"I had two tough matches before and that affected me a little bit," Sanchez said. "I was a little late into the ball. It has been a long time since I played matches in that heat. I can play better than I did."

Testud next faces Austrian 11th seed Barbara Paulus and the winner will advance to a semi-final against either seventh-seeded Romanian Irina Spilrea or fourth-seeded Monica Seles.

Seles won her third match in a row after a four-month layoff, beating Asa Carlsson of Sweden 6-2, 6-1 in just 55 minutes.

Seles suffered a broken finger trying to catch a ball hit by Swiss teenage sensation Martina Hingis in practice.

"I played my best of all three matches today," Seles said. "I'm still far from where I want to be. But that comes from not playing for so long."



Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario

Hingis, who next week will claim the world number-one ranking, stretched her unbeaten winning start to the season to 23 victories when she beat 16th seed Elena Likhovtseva of Russia 6-3, 2-6, 6-3.

"It was very hot out there, a tough match," Hingis said. "Today was a good match to help with your self-confidence. It was will power. I have improved my game with every match here."

"Everyone is waiting, saying 'when is she going to lose her first match?'" said Hingis, adding: "I'm going to try not to lose any of them."

Hingis plays 10th seed Mary Joe Fernandez in the quarter-finals. Fernandez was a surprise

straight-sets 6-2, 6-4 winner over compatriot and former doubles partner and friend Lindsay Davenport.

Fernandez, the only quarter-finalist not born in Europe, has not been on the best of terms with Davenport since they split as doubles partners.

"We are, I guess, trying to work some things out," Fernandez said while Davenport said: "We're trying to become friends again."

We're not as close as we used to be but we're talking. It will take some time."

Third-seed Jana Novotna beat Russian teenager Anna Kournikova 6-3, 6-4 and next faces eighth-seeded Iva Majoli, who defeated Barbara Schett 6-2, 4-6, 6-2.

Big-spenders try to topple Yanks

MIAMI (AFP) — Big-spending owners have made the Florida Marlins and Chicago White Sox the biggest Major League Baseball threats to overcome the World Series champion New York Yankees.

The six-month regular season begins next week with a handful of wealthy clubs trying to dethrone the Yankees, who defeated Atlanta four games to two in last October's championship series.

White Sox owner Jerry Reinsdorf, who also owns the basketball champion Chicago Bulls, spent \$55 million to lure controversial slugger Albert Belle from his American League arch-rivals, the Cleveland Indians. "We are a dangerous team. There will be a lot of explosives," White Sox power hitter Frank "Big Hurt" Thomas said.

Marlins' owner Wayne Huizenga, who also owns American football's Miami Dolphins, spent \$96 million on six top free agents.

The Marlins lost their first 10 pre-season games in 1996 but own the best 1997 exhibition record of any club by five games. The price tag was hefty.

Third baseman Bobby Bonilla came from Baltimore for \$23.3 million over four years. Outfielder Moises Alou came from Montreal for \$25 million over five years.

White Sox pitcher Alex Fernandez, outfielders John Cangelosi of Houston and Jim Eisenreich of Philadelphia plus Texas hurler Dennis Cook also

came for rich deals.

The Marlins also signed respected manager Jim Leyland, who cried when he left Pittsburgh because owners chose cheap players over elite ones. The club payroll here for 1997, \$48 million, is four times that of Pittsburgh.

The Marlins also return Gary Sheffield, who batted .314, hit 42 home runs and knocked home a career-high 120 runs last year. He was walked 142 times and reached base more than any other National League player.

The Braves have won four of the past five NL crowns and could repeat behind pitching stars Greg Maddux, Tom Glavine and John Smoltz plus the return of outfielder David Justice from injury.

St. Louis was one win away from reaching the World Series last year and should threaten again and Los Angeles is always a contender, even though the Dodgers have not won a playoff game since taking the 1988 World Series.

In the American League, the White Sox have power. Belle slammed 48 homers and batted in 148 runs while Thomas smacked 40 homers and plated 130 runs. Robin Ventura added 34 homers and knocked home 105 runs.

Together they will be paid \$23.1 million this year, about twice the entire payroll of rival Milwaukee. Even with Ventura out four months with a broken leg, the Sox have

strength to spare.

Cleveland's clubhouse might not miss Belle's fiery temper, but several key players are gone from the AL champions of 1995.

In the West, Seattle has batting champion Alex Rodriguez and slugger Ken Griffey Jr. while Texas added world series most valuable player John Wetteland, the Yankees' relief ace who ousted them in last year's playoffs.

The Yankees also lost pitcher Jimmy Key to Baltimore for \$7.88 million,

but they signed ex-Oriole hurler David Wells.

The Orioles have switched global ironman Cal Ripken from shortstop to third base as his consecutive games streak has gone beyond 2,300. Mike Bordick took Ripken's spot for nine million dollars over three years.

Then there are the poor clubs, whose fate was put well by Milwaukee manager Phil Garner: "We will play our hearts out against them, but the bottom line is (we) don't have a chance."

First-ever regular season games between leagues will be played this year to form special rivalries between clubs in New York, California and Chicago.

The first White Sox-Cubs game with meaning since the 1906 World Series will cost a minimum of \$28 a ticket.

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TOO CLEVER BY FAR

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NORTH
♠ Q 6 4
♥ A K Q 10 4
♦ Q 9 5 4
♣ 10

WEST
♠ 10 8 8
♥ 9 7 5 2
♦ A 7 3 2
♣ 8 8

EAST
♠ 9 7
♥ J 8 6
♦ K 10
♣ K J 9 7 6 2

SOUTH
♠ A K J 5 2
♥ 7 3
♦ J 8 6
♣ A Q 5 4

The bidding:
NORTH SOUTH WEST NORTH
Pass 1♣ Pass 2♣
Pass 2♣ Pass 2♣
Pass 2♣ Pass 2♣

Opening lead: Two of ♣

An excellent new bridge publication, *European Bridge*, is now available. Appearing six times a year, it is nicely presented and the first issue ran to 100 pages. Its price is \$39.50 per annum and can be ordered from the publishers, Ace International AS, Munksgaarden 12 D, N-3110 Tonsberg, Norway.

The first issue carried a report on

the Macellan Invitational Pairs held earlier this year in London. This hand features one of our favorite characters, cigar-smoking wine connoisseur/players devotee Paul Chemia of Paris, France, sitting West and playing with fellow Parisian, French internationalist Christian Mari.

North's jump to four clubs was a splinter bid, showing a singleton club and the values for game in spades. With so much in clubs, South had no desire to proceed beyond game.

Chemia analyzed the bidding before selecting the opening lead. North had shown values in the majors and shortness in clubs, so diamonds seemed like the obvious suit to attack. The two of diamonds was Chemia's choice.

At first glance, it seemed like a superb choice. The defenders would score a diamond ruff and so hold declarer to 10 tricks for an excellent score. Unfortunately, East held the one card that turned a brilliant lead into a killer for the defense — the ten of diamonds. Mari, never thinking the lead was away from the ace, made the normal play of the ten, and declarer wrapped up all 13 tricks with the help of a club finesse for a top score.

KEY BISCAYNE, Florida (AFP) — World No. 1 Pete Sampras has a seedless path to the finals of the ATP Lipton Championships after reaching the round of 16 by beating Spain's Francisco Clavet.

Sampras, notched up his 19th victory in 20 matches so far this season when he defeated the 36th-ranked Spaniard 6-3, 7-6 (7/3) here Monday in a third-round match at the \$2.45 million event.

He had five aces and 38 winners to subdue Clavet in 98 minutes.

"I got a little careless and let him back into the match," Sampras said. Seventh-seed Carlos Moya, named to Spain's Davis Cup team Monday, was eliminated by Sweden Mikael Tillstrom 6-4, 3-6.

6-3 to leave Sampras the only seed in his half of the draw at the \$2.45 million event.

"It's not that surprising," Sampras said. "There are so many upsets these days. It doesn't matter if you are 60th, 70th or 100th, if you don't come out ready there are good players who can beat you."

Sweden's Magnus Larsson will celebrate his 27th birthday Tuesday by facing Sampras for a quarter-final berth.

Larsson has lost five of six meetings with Sampras — his only triumph came at the 1994 Grand Slam Cup final.

Larsson and Tillstrom are among four Swedes to reach the fourth-round, matching highs here from 1986 and 1995.

The Swedish group also includes Jonas Bjorkman and Nicklas Kulti.

Tillstrom, ranked 66th, avenged a loss to Moya earlier this month at Scottsdale and will next play German Hendrik Dreekman.

Kulti faces Ukrainian Andrei Medvedev. And Bjorkman meets hard-serving Australian Mark Philippoussis.

World number-two Thomas Muster romped past 166th-ranked German Tommy Haas 6-1, 6-2 and now faces Spain's Alex Corretja in round four with an eye toward a possible final showdown with Sampras.

Sampras beat Muster 6-1, 7-6, 6-3, in the Australian Open semi-finals and has won seven of eight meetings with the

Austrian, losing only in the 1995 Essen semi-finals.

Still, clay master Muster is confident he can beat Pete on hard courts.

"Why not? I have beaten him indoors," Muster said. "There is definitely an advantage on his side — his serve. It's an advantage on any surface we're playing on. He is probably the most complete player for the moment."

Fifth-seed and Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek beat France's Arnaud Boetsch 6-3, 7-5. The Dutch player next faces former world No. 1 Jim Courier, a 4-6, 6-1, 6-4 winner over Australia's Scott Draper.

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Food-for-oil trucks start arriving in Iraq from Jordan, Turkey

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Trucks loaded with salt have entered Iraq from Jordan for the first time under the oil-for-food deal with the United Nations as more food convoys crossed from Turkey, U.N. officials said Tuesday.

A Gulf port was also set to open for humanitarian supplies, launching U.N.-approved imports by sea to sanctions-hit Iraq.

A total of 86 trucks carrying 1,500 tonnes of chick peas, cooking oil, white beans and salt have entered Iraq since deliveries under the deal began Thursday from Turkey, an official said.

"The second entrance point became active Monday with the arrival of the first shipments of salt from Jordan" on board 19 trucks, a U.N. official said. A total of 1,500 tonnes of salt is expected to be delivered under that contract.

The third transit point, the Gulf port of Umm Qasr, was expected to receive its first shipment later Tuesday, he added.

"The Hung-Jiang, which is carrying 13,000 tonnes of Thai rice, will dock in the late afternoon at Umm Qasr," he said. "Unloading will begin this evening or tomorrow morning."

More than 2.2 million tonnes of food consisting of wheat, flour, rice, sugar, tea, cooking oil, infant milk powder, and salt — are to be imported under the plan over six months.

Medicine as well as toilet soap and detergents will also be distributed.

Food prices have gone down because of a rise in the dinar value against the dollar since last week's launch of the imports paid for with revenue from Iraqi oil exports.

But no date has been announced for the distribution of food, medicine and other humanitarian supplies under the deal which took effect on Dec. 10 when Iraq resumed oil exports for the first time in six years.

So far 45 humanitarian contracts have been approved by the U.N. Sanctions Committee while more than 200 are pending. Iraq has complained the process is too slow.

The first medical supplies, under a contract with a British firm, are due to fly into Amman before being trucked to Iraq, but no date has been given for the arrival of that shipment, the official said.

Under the terms of the oil-for-food deal, the first easing of sanctions since they were imposed after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, Iraq can export \$2 billion of oil every six months.

The proceeds are earmarked for purchases of humanitarian goods, as well as to defray UN costs and compensate victims of the invasion.

Educational supplies as well as equipment for power plants and sewage treatment plants in Iraq are also allowed under the deal enshrined in U.N. Security Council Resolution 986.

Kuwait rejects Iraqi report on missing

Kuwait, on Tuesday dismissed reports that Iraq has resolved half of the 600 cases of missing people from its 1990-1991 occupation of the emirate.

"Iraq has submitted incomplete information on 120 Kuwaitis whom it recognises having detained and taken to its territory, but there has been no other news," said an official of a Kuwaiti committee on the missing.

Kuwait demands "serious information," he said. Iraq has, however, "returned the remains of a Kuwaiti prisoner," acknowledged Ibrahim Majed Al Shabani. But Iraq is still "obliged to clarify the fate of all the Kuwaiti, Saudi and other prisoners."

Baghdad announced Monday that it has submitted files on 300 missing cases to an Iraqi-Kuwaiti joint committee which meets under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

A member of an Iraqi committee on the missing, which also deals with Iraqi and Saudi cases, said photographs will be pasted up in public places around the country as part of a search for all the missing.

Baghdad says it has released all Kuwaitis detained during the August 1990 — February 1991 occupation and that the emirate is exploiting the missing file to prolong the U.N. sanctions against Iraq.

According to Kuwait, 549 Kuwaitis are still being held by Iraq, along with nationals of 10 other countries. Iraq says it lost track of such detainees when uprisings rocked the country after its defeat in the 1991 Gulf war over Kuwait.

NEWS IN BRIEF

UAE gives \$2 million to Palestinians

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) president, Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan, has decided to send \$2 million worth of food aid for the Palestinians to face Israel's closure of their territories. The official news agency WAM said late Monday that the aid was "to support the resistance of the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza in the face of the Israeli blockade." The Jewish state closed the territories after a suicide bombing in Tel Aviv on Friday that killed three Israeli women.

Iraq accuses Turkey of recruiting Kurds

BAGHDAD (AFP) — An official Iraqi newspaper accused neighbouring Turkey on Tuesday of building a network of agents to spread its influence in the Kurdish-held north of the country. The Turkish Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), meanwhile, has also stepped up its presence in Iraqi Kurdistan, said Al Iraq in a report from the main Kurdish city of Erbil. Ankara has set up schools "to spread Turkish culture and recruit agents," said the newspaper, which is run by Kurdish groups loyal to Baghdad. It pinned the blame for the trend on "the absence of state authority," referring to the Kurds' control of northern Iraq in defiance of Baghdad since the 1991 Gulf war.

Iran slams Oslo's call for sanctions

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran on Tuesday dismissed Norway's call for economic sanctions against Tehran over the Rushdie affair as unwarranted and unrealistic. "This uncalculated position is unrealistic and beyond Norway's political credit," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Mahmoud Mohammadi, quoted by the official press. Norway on Wednesday called for international economic sanctions to be imposed on Iran in response to the 1989 death sentence decreed against British writer Salman Rushdie. "We feel that the time has now come for joint, coordinated international action."

Saudi in Canada could be deported

OTTAWA (R) — Canada might deport a Saudi man whom the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) wants to question about a bombing in Saudi Arabia that killed 19 U.S. troops, if hearings in Ottawa determined this would be merited, immigration officials said on Monday.

The man, Hani Abdul Rahim Hussein Al Sayegh, was arrested in Ottawa last Tuesday on the grounds that he represented "a security risk to Canada," said Benoit Chiquette, spokesman for Immigration Minister Lucienne Robillard.

Mr. Sayegh denied he was involved in last June's bombing in Saudi Arabia and said he was not in the country at the time.

Speaking from behind heavy glass in an interview with a small group of reporters, Mr. Sayegh said through a translator: "I was astonished to be accused, and especially to be accused of being the driver of the (getaway) car."

Mr. Sayegh said that about two years ago he had fled from Saudi Arabia to Syria, and went from there to Ottawa last August — two months after the bombing of a military housing complex in eastern Saudi Arabia — and applied to be a refugee. He said he had stamps in his passport to prove his whereabouts.

Soft-spoken, neatly groomed and wearing a dark blue prison uniform, he denied having a connection to any dissident or guerrilla organisations, saying: "I have no relations with any organisation. I have relations with the general public."

It became clear during the interview that he was a devout Shi'ite Muslim. He studied religion in Qom, the main Shi'ite learning centre in Iran.

Unconfirmed reports have said that some of those who carried out the bombing were trained in Iran and Lebanon.

Mr. Sayegh said he feared going back to Saudi Arabia and that he would not cooperate with the FBI.

U.S. officials in Washington said Mr. Sayegh was suspected of being the driver of a get-away car used after the bombing.

The FBI said on Saturday that it hoped to be able to question Mr. Sayegh about the truck bomb attack.

The process will have to pass a number of legal tests, but Ms. Robillard has indicated a willingness to deport — or "remove" — people who are security risks even if there was a possibility that they could face the death penalty abroad.

The minister was asked that question on Friday, and her answer was very clear, that obviously we always look at the personal risk related to removing an individual, but the most important issue at stake in making decisions about removal is always the safety and security of Canadians," Mr. Chiquette said.

Mr. Sayegh is being detained at an Ottawa prison where another Saudi, Fahad Al Shehri, is also being held.

Canadian officials say Mr. Shehri was arrested in December after he sought to become a refugee, supposedly because he said the Saudi government wanted him in connection with the bombing.

He denies involvement in the bombing, however, and the Saudi government also denies wanting him.

Mr. Sayegh, in contrast, would be valuable if the reports about him are confirmed.

The unusual FBI statement said it was grateful for Canada's vigilant actions that it hoped would "assist the United States and Saudi Arabia in the ongoing investigation of the Khobar Towers bombing."

It said the Saudi government provided "equally invaluable assistance leading to the identification and location of Al Sayegh."



Palestinians in Gaza chanting slogans on Tuesday in protest against the building of a new settlement in Jabal Abu Ghneim in Arab East Jerusalem. They also demanded the release of Palestinian prisoners (Reuters photo)

Fateh warning sparks settler uproar

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — A member of Yasser Arafat's Fateh party warned on Israeli radio Tuesday that Palestinians could use arms if necessary to counter Israel's settlement activity, sparking a storm of Israeli protest.

"The Palestinian leadership has a lot of weapons and a lot of rocks," said Fateh member Bassem Sa'eh, speaking after days of violent protests in the West Bank over Israel's decision to build a new Jewish settlement called Har Homa in Arab East Jerusalem.

"If we don't achieve our rights with rocks, we will use even guns to get them," he said.

Mr. Sa'eh, speaking Hebrew, tempered his statement by adding: "We're not threatening the Israeli people, we want to live together. But if the Israeli government doesn't want U.S. to live together, it won't happen."

"The Israeli government needs to stop building (Har Homa) and return to the peace process ... 'we don't want violence,' he said.

The remarks by Mr. Sa'eh came two days after a meeting of West Bank Fateh leaders called on Palestinians to "confront settlements and settlers by all legitimate means," including blocking settler roads and beginning a gradual boycott of Israeli products.

Marwan Barghout, general secretary of Fateh on the West Bank, said settlement was growing inside the movement for stepping up confrontation.

"There is a strong movement among

Fateh members who want to resume resistance in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem areas that are under occupation," he told AFP on Tuesday.

"We see no reason to continue negotiations, what we need now is a strengthening of coordination with all the other (Palestinian) factions, mainly Hamas," he said.

"The other side should know that in order for the peace process to continue, it should commit itself to the conditions of the peace process, and begin by stopping settlement activities," he said.

The Fateh statements were seen by the Israeli media and settlement leaders as a call to uprising — a return to the intifada rebellion against Israeli occupation which ravaged the West Bank and Gaza Strip from 1988 until the signing of the first Oslo peace accord in 1993.

"This is a call for the murder of Israeli citizens," said Ron Nahman, mayor of the west bank settlement of Ariel.

"An intifada is two-sided," he told Israel Radio. "If the Arabs think it's more worth it for them to open an intifada and to call for the murder of Israeli residents of the West Bank, I want to warn them that the road is two-way."

"It is the right of all citizens to defend themselves," Mr. Nahman said, adding that he was calling for a "Jewish intifada."

The council of West Bank settlers

issued a statement calling on the government to take "serious and immediate" action over the Fateh statements and demanded the closure of Fateh offices in areas under Israeli control.

The Fateh statements came in the midst of several days of Palestinian rock-throwing demonstrations against Israeli troops in the West Bank in reaction to the launch last week of work on the new East Jerusalem settlement.

"Our objective is to raise our voice to the world against settlement activity. But we are not calling for violence," Mahmoud Jasser, a Fateh spokesman in the West Bank district of Ramallah, told Reuters.

The Fateh meeting called for blocking roads used by Jewish settlers in the West Bank and for mass marches. It urged Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to suspend peace talks and sever all contacts with Israel.

The Yeshiva Jewish settlers council blasted the decision and called on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to take action against Fateh.

"The Fateh decision to renew armed struggle, harm Israelis, close bypass roads and call to restart the intifada requires uncompromising action against its ranks, the terror reserve of Arafat," Yehsa said in a statement.

Mr. Jasser said Fateh had been under public pressure to take the lead in confronting Israeli settlement plans.

"We consider Israel's building a massacre against Jerusalem and we must try to defend the city," he said.

Netanyahu has 'pledged' more settlements

Reprinted from the Jerusalem Report

ALREADY UNDER heavy fire from Jordan, the Palestinians and Egypt, and under more subtle pressure from the U.S. to make conciliatory moves in the peace process, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has promised right-wing Knesset members a major boost in settlement activity in order to keep his coalition intact. The Jerusalem Report has learned.

The "Greater Israel Front" — over 20 legislators from all the right-wing parties including Mr. Netanyahu's Likud — has extracted promises on new bypass roads for settlers in the West Bank: "filling in" the belt of settlement around Jerusalem, and building in the Jewish sector of Hebron.

Michael Kleiner, chairman of the group, told The Report that in an hour-long meeting with Mr. Netanyahu in early March, the prime minister promised him "everything." And, he said, Netanyahu has already authorised construction that would link the West Bank city of Ma'aleh Adumim with Jerusalem.

For now, in light of the prime minister's pledges, the group has shelved plans to topple the government in a no-

confidence vote. But, says Mr. Kleiner, it will keep up the pressure. The Front intends to focus on a single issue at a time, threatening to desert the coalition and vote Mr. Netanyahu out unless he acts — as it did in late February when it forced a government decision to build 6,500 Jewish homes on the East Jerusalem site of Har Homa.

That move — along with the March 7 cabinet decision to transfer nine per cent of the West Bank to various degrees of Palestinian control, at a time when the Palestinians were hoping for 30 per cent — was a key factor in arousing international pressure on Mr. Netanyahu.

To increase its pressure on Mr. Netanyahu, the "Greater Israel Front" also aims at pushing through an amendment to the Direct Election Law, making it possible for a majority of 61 Knesset members — and not the 80 currently required — to depose the prime minister without forcing new parliamentary elections. With the support of the Labour opposition, that change could well be approved.

"And that," says Kleiner, "would give us added leverage. I hope we won't have to use it. My aim is not to topple him, but to get him to mend his ways."

Malaysians stage protest against presence of Israel's cricket team

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — Hundreds of Muslims staged a demonstration and burnt Israeli flags here Tuesday to protest the unprecedented presence of Israel's cricket team in Malaysia.

Some 300 members of the Muslim Parti Islam (PAS) which rules Kelantan, Malaysia's sole opposition-controlled state, carried placards reading "Damn you Israel" and "Get out Israel, we hate you" at the central Merdeka Square.

The group then marched under the scorching sun to Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad's nearby office to submit a letter protesting the government's decision to allow the Israeli team to enter Malaysia.

After delivering the letter, they burnt two Israeli flags then peacefully dispersed as police watched from a distance.

Predominantly Muslim Malaysia has no diplomatic ties with Israel but they have limited trade relations.

Mr. Mohammad said over the week-

end after returning from Saudi Arabia, where he received the King Faisal Award for services to Islam, that Malaysia wanted to show the visiting Israelis how different races can live together in peace.

Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim told reporters after the protest that the Israeli cricket team should not be associated with politics or diplomacy.

"We take the view that sports associations be it from any country or any nationality to me, are apolitical, nothing to do with politics ... whether you recognise (the country) or not," Mr. Ibrahim said.

The Israeli cricket team arrived here Sunday to compete in the 21-day International Cricket Council (ICC) trophy, the country's first sporting appearance in Malaysia, which has close ties to the Arab World.

The Malaysian Cricket Association (MCA) earlier said the inclusion of Israel was a condition for holding the tournament involving 22 ICC-associ-

ate nations. The top three teams qualify to join the nine test playing nations in the 1999 Cricket World Cup.

In the Muslim party's protest letter, PAS Vice-President Abdul Hadi Awang slammed the government's decision to issue visas to the Israelis, seeing it as tacit diplomatic recognition of the Jewish state.

"The government's insensitivity to allow the bastard Israelis to step foot here has shamed the Islam race in Malaysia. It also reflects their close ties with the Zionists at the expense of righteous human values," Mr. Hadi said.

"Where is the pride of the Malaysian government? It is clear that the government has no principles and is practising double standards."

"What is the meaning of the King Faisal Award which is against Israel if the recipient at the same time invites Islam's enemy into the country?"

PAS urged the government to cancel the Israelis' visas and make them leave the country immediately.

COLUMN

82-year-old woman passes driving test

TEL AVIV (AP) — An 82-year-old Israeli woman who has been trying to get a driver's licence for the past four decades has passed the test on her 36th attempt. "I invited her to my office to give her the good news," Haim Alcoby, director of the transport ministry licensing bureau in Ashdod, south of Tel Aviv, said Tuesday. Shulamit Dezhin failed the examination so many times she lost count, but Alcoby told the Associated Press she passed on her 36th attempt. "We are satisfied that Dezhin is fit to drive, regardless of how many times she failed," he said. Dezhin took her telephone off the hook Tuesday because she was inundated with congratulatory calls, her driving instructor, David Assayag said. Mrs. Dezhin told the Maariv newspaper that she had always been an excellent driver, "but when I took the test I always got uptight and confused. I wasted tens of thousands of shekels on driving lessons, but I always believed that one day I would pass." Dezhin said she originally wanted to get her licence so she could drive to Tel Aviv to visit her ailing parents. "They're dead now, but I will be able to drive with my grandchildren," she told the Jerusalem Post. Assayag, who has taught Mrs. Dezhin for the past two years, said he made a special effort because he saw her as a challenge. Dezhin plans to frame her licence and hang it in her room. "I think I can give hope to other frustrated students," she said. "Don't ever give up."

Man gets married, rapes four-year-old

METZ (AFP) — A 38-year-old man who got married on Saturday, raped a four-year-old girl on Sunday and was arrested on Monday, gendarmes said on Tuesday. The man, who was not identified, lured the girl into the cellars of the apartment block where she lived, gendarmes said. The girl's mother, worried about her daughter's prolonged absence, saw the child emerging from the cellars and the man, whom she recognised, running away. Gendarmes arrested the man at his home at dawn on Monday. The young girl was taken to hospital in this eastern French town for tests.

Judge jails indecisive jurors

LONDON (AFP) — In a case described as a first in British legal history, a furious judge jailed two women jurors for contempt of court after they said they could not reach a verdict in a 17-day counterfeiting trial, on Tuesday. Knightsbridge crown court, Judge Anna Cooray, sentenced jury foreman Bonnie Schor, 20, and juror Carol Barclay, 32, each to 30 days in Holloway prison on Monday for contempt of court after the counterfeiting case had to be abandoned. A lawyer for one of the women said she simply had not understood the evidence, and that the judge had been trying to pressure her into a guilty verdict. The lawyer said the action was "unheard of in modern times." The 61-year-old judge stood by his ruling. "They sat through a 17-day trial and four hours of summing up in a case with five defendants and then they decided, with no reason, that they did not want to give a decision," he said in press interviews.